

\$2.50

# Public Opinion

Published by  
American  
Enterprise  
Institute

Feb/Mar 1980

## The New Nationalism and the 1980 Elections

by Norman Podhoretz



### Will Foreign Policy be the #1 Issue?

A symposium with William Bundy, Richard Goodwin, Tom Hayden, Samuel Huntington,  
Clare Boothe Luce and Donald Rumsfeld

plus

Thomas Cronin "Looking for Leadership 1980," Polls and Politics with  
Michael Wheeler, Burns W. Roper, Alan Baron and Richard Jensen



# About the Authors

---

**ALAN J. BARON** is editor and publisher of *The Baron Report*, a highly regarded political newsletter. Active in Democratic party politics for some time, Baron has served as executive director of the Democratic Planning Group and editor of a newsletter on party affairs. A leading political analyst and commentator, he has written articles on politics for the *Washington Post* and *Esquire*. He is also the Washington editor of *Politics Today* magazine.

**THOMAS E. CRONIN**, professor of political science at the University of Delaware, has written extensively on the presidency and American politics. His newest book, *The State of the Presidency* (Little, Brown & Co.), will be published this month. Dr. Cronin is a visiting professor this year at Colorado College. A former White House Fellow, Cronin holds a Ph.D. in political science from Stanford.

**RICHARD JENSEN** is professor of history and sociology at the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle. He has used historical election returns and early public opinion polls to analyze the development of American voting behavior in the last century. His book *The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896* (1971) introduced new quantitative techniques into political history, and stressed the importance of ethnic and religious factors in voting behavior. He also has studied the history of social science methodology in the United States.

**RICHARD LINK** is president of Richard F. Link and Associates, a consulting firm in New York City. The firm provides statistical advice to a variety of polling organizations including Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Opinion Research Corporation, the *New York Daily News*, and the NBC News Election Unit.

**NORMAN PODHORETZ** is editor-in-chief of *Commentary* magazine and editor of *The Commentary Reader: Two Decades of Articles and Stories* (1966). He has lectured on foreign policy, American culture, literary matters, and Jewish affairs, and has appeared often on radio and television. He is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, and a board member of both the Coalition for a Democratic Majority and the Committee on the Present Danger. In addition to contributing articles and reviews to many major American periodicals, he has written three books, the latest of which is *Breaking Ranks: A Political Memoir* (1979).

**BURNS W. ROPER** is chairman of the board of the Roper Organization, Inc., one of the nation's major polling institutions. He has published numerous articles and has been a frequent political commentator on public television. He has also contributed two previous pieces to *Public Opinion*.

**MICHAEL WHEELER**, the author of *Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics*, a book about the polling profession, is professor of law at New England School of Law in Boston. As a contributing journalist for WGBH-TV in Boston, he appears regularly on the evening news to analyze political, economic, and legal issues. He has also appeared on PBS's MacNeil/Lehrer Report. His most recent book is *Divided Children*.

The material in the Opinion Roundup section of the magazine has been prepared with the invaluable assistance of the Roper Center, the oldest and largest archive of opinion survey data in the world. Final editorial responsibilities for the contents of Opinion Roundup rests, of course, with the editors of the magazine. The Roper Center is an affiliate of the University of Connecticut, Yale University, and Williams College. The center's archives are open to all students of public opinion on a contractual basis. Everett Carl Ladd, Jr. who serves as consulting editor of this roundup, is executive director of the Roper Center.



---

*Publisher*

William J. Baroody, Jr.

---

*Co-Editors*

Seymour Martin Lipset  
Ben J. Wattenberg

*Managing Editor*

David R. Gergen

*Deputy Managing Editor*

Karlyn H. Keene

*Associate Editor*

Victoria A. Sackett

*Research Assistants*

Susan E. Hennemuth  
Mary A. Favret  
Nicola Furlan

*Editorial Consultant*

Hunter C. Harrison, Jr.

---

*Editorial Board*

William J. Baroody, Sr., Jeane J.  
Kirkpatrick, Irving Kristol, Everett Carl  
Ladd, Jr., Howard Penniman, Austin  
Ranney, Richard M. Scammon,  
Laurence H. Silberman, Herbert Stein,  
and Richard J. Whalen

---

*Consulting Editor for*

*Opinion Roundup*  
Everett Carl Ladd, Jr.

*Editorial Associate*

Marilyn M. Potter

---


*Art & Design Director*

Pat Taylor

*Production Manager*

Elizabeth D. Ashooh

---

PUBLIC OPINION, February/March 1980, Vol. 3, No. 1A. Published bimonthly by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. Copyright 1980 American Enterprise Institute. Subscription rates: \$12.00 for one year, \$22.00 for two years. Individual copy: \$2.50. Information on bulk orders or multiple subscriptions available on request. Editorial and business offices: c/o AEI, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Send changes of address and all subscription correspondence to Circulation Department, c/o AEI, same address. "American Enterprise Institute" and  are registered service marks of the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C.

ISSN 0149-9157

---

## CONTENTS

### 2 THE NEW NATIONALISM AND THE 1980 ELECTIONS

by Norman Podhoretz

*Contrary to conventional wisdom, foreign policy issues have helped to shape presidential elections for the past twenty years. In 1980, they will be even more central, for the country is now caught up in a wave of new feeling.*

### 6 IRAN & AFGHANISTAN: TURNING POINTS FOR AMERICA?

A symposium with William Bundy, Richard Goodwin, Tom Hayden, Samuel Huntington, Clare Boothe Luce, Don Rumsfeld

*Many commentators have asked whether events in Iran and Afghanistan have been "hinge events" for the United States. Public Opinion asked six opinion makers for their views.*

### 12 THE HARDENING MOOD TOWARD FOREIGN POLICY

*An editor's update on the evolution of American attitudes toward foreign policy.*

### 14 LOOKING FOR LEADERSHIP, 1980

by Thomas E. Cronin

*"Leadership" has been the rallying cry of every presidential candidate this year. But some of those with the most "macho" have been the first to fall. What are Americans looking for?*

### 21 OPINION ROUNDUP

#### POLLS AND POLITICS

### 41 REINING IN HORSERACE JOURNALISM

by Michael Wheeler

*Discrepancies among polls have frequently led to questions about pollsters and their techniques. Mr. Wheeler shifts the spotlight from methodology to the media. The fourth estate, he argues, needs to clean up its own stable.*

### 46 THE MEDIA AND THE POLLS: A BOXSCORE

by Burns W. Roper

*One of the nation's leading opinion researchers assesses the impact of contemporary journalism on the polls. A quick, ten-step guide. In a sidebar, Mr. Roper looks at the wide fluctuation in polls of recent months.*

### 50 THE ALMANAC OF POLITICAL POLLSTERS

by Alan J. Baron

*Washington palmist Alan Baron provides a layman's guide to the candidates' pollsters. The candidates view these sidekicks as anything from mystics to attractive nuisances. The reader may judge for himself.*

### 53 DEMOCRACY BY THE NUMBERS

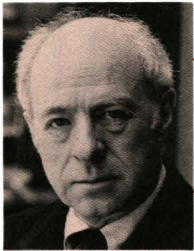
by Richard Jensen

*Mr. Jensen traces the development of polling from the early days of the Republic to its explosion in the twentieth century. Like the polls, the evolution has had many ups and downs.*

### 60 SNAPSHOTS

by Karlyn H. Keene





---

by Norman Podhoretz

---

# The New Nationalism and the 1980 Elections

**A**ccording to the conventional wisdom, foreign policy counts for relatively little in peacetime presidential elections. And indeed if we consult the psephological evidence, we find that most respondents will usually get around to foreign policy, if they mention it at all, only after they have listed ten or more domestic issues that concern them more closely. A particular constituency may care passionately about a particular aspect of foreign policy—the Jewish concern over Israel being perhaps the most obvious example—but in general what seems to preoccupy the voters is the state of the economy rather than the international position of the nation.

Iran and Afghanistan upset the conventional wisdom on this matter as they have upset so much else. Yet even before Iran and Afghanistan there was good reason to question the idea of the American voter as someone indifferent to international affairs. No doubt the data faithfully reflect what people say when surveyed by pollsters, but how well do they reflect the way people actually behave at the polls?

Looking back at the last five presidential elections, my own impression is that questions of foreign policy

have been very important in every one. In 1960, Cuba, Quemoy and Matsu, and the “missile gap” all became issues between Nixon and Kennedy, with Kennedy consistently taking the harder line. (Nixon himself has said that Kennedy’s success in convincing “60 million people” watching their televised debates “that he was tougher on Castro and Communism than I was” had much to do with the results of that election.) In 1964, conversely, Johnson’s success in representing Goldwater as trigger-happy and therefore unfit to be president in the nuclear age, contributed to the landslide. And, of course, Johnson’s inability to unite the country behind his policy in Vietnam led him to step down in 1968 in favor of Humphrey, whose narrow defeat at the hands of Nixon was mightily influenced by the same problem. The Nixon landslide of 1972 was an obverse replay of Johnson’s triumph over Goldwater: just as the electorate severely punished the Republicans in 1964 for nominating a representative of the party’s Right wing, so it punished the Democrats for nominating a representative of the party’s Left; and just as Goldwater’s ideas about foreign and defense policy made him vul-



nerable to charges of extremism, so McGovern's willingness to settle the Vietnam War on terms that amounted to surrender, and his generally hostile attitude toward the role of American power in the world, helped persuade the voters that he, too, was an extremist. Finally in 1976, détente in general and Ford's refusal to receive Solzhenitsyn in the White House emerged as serious issues in the Republican primaries, and Ford was badly hurt in the general election when he attributed independence to Poland in one of the television debates with Carter.

It would be impossible to say exactly how important foreign policy was in relation to domestic issues in each of these five campaigns. Obviously, in the very close races of 1960, 1968, and 1976, it must have mattered more than in the landslides of 1964 and 1972, if only because everything matters in a very close race. Obviously, too, Vietnam must have been a more telling issue in the three campaigns that took place while we were fighting there than in the two that preceded and succeeded our direct military involvement.

### Yet Another Hostage: The U.S. Economy

Yet even if it were possible to demonstrate that economic issues played a much greater role than foreign policy in the last five campaigns, this would tell us something about the past but very little about the present. The reason is that the distinction between the state of the economy and the international position of the United States has faded to the point of invisibility. Neither the level of inflation, nor the level of employment, nor the rate of growth can any longer be managed by policies of a strictly domestic character. With the emergence of OPEC, the fall of the Shah, and the Soviet move to gain control of Middle Eastern oil, the state of the American economy has become hostage to external forces. To an extent unprecedented in the American experience, economic issues have now become issues of foreign policy.

Before Iran and Afghanistan this truth had not yet become self-evident to the voters, or even to the candidates, some of whom tried to go on pretending that this or that change in our domestic arrangements could "solve" all our economic problems. But after Iran and Afghanistan not even that degree of obtuseness or disingenuousness could prevent international affairs from occupying the center of this year's presidential election. Within a few weeks after the hostages were seized, Carter, who had been *trailing* Kennedy by more than thirty points in the polls, was *leading* him by the same margin as the favored candidate of Democratic voters for the nomination and then whipped him handily in Iowa. To be sure, this extraordinarily dramatic reversal owed something to Kennedy's bumbling and inarticulate response to questions asked by Roger Mudd and other interviewers about Chappaquiddick and about his reasons for running. But it owed even more to the crises in Southwest Asia. That Carter's handling of the Iran-

ian crisis, at least in the first few weeks, accounted for the rise in his own popularity, no one could doubt. But Kennedy's attack on the Shah in San Francisco, in appearing to justify the Iranian aggression against the United States, certainly did its share in bringing about both the decline of his own fortunes and the rise in the President's.

### Steady Emergence of a New Mood

Changes as wild as this in the standing of particular candidates might seem to suggest a highly volatile public mood. But the volatility lies in the perception of how each candidate measures up to what the voters demand of a president, not in the nature of the demand itself. Indeed, far from being shifting or volatile, the public mood has been moving steadily during the past few years in a consistent direction—toward what might be called a new nationalism.

This new nationalism made its first significant appearance in presidential politics in 1972 when widespread disgust with the negative attitudes toward American power in the world expressed by the "new politics" movement and by McGovern himself ("Come Home America") enabled even so unpopular a politician as Richard Nixon to win by the second largest margin in American history. A few years later it surfaced once more in the overwhelming public approval of Daniel P. Moynihan's declarations as ambassador to the U.N. of the moral and political superiority of the United States to its critics and enemies both in the Communist bloc and in the Third World. It burst out again during the bicentennial celebrations in 1976. And, of course, it reached the dimensions of a tidal wave in response to the taking of the hostages in Iran. Of the many expressions of what everyone was suddenly calling the "new patriotism," my own favorite was the comment of an administrator at San Diego State University, a survivor of the campus rallies of the 1960s, as he watched a self-described "pro-American rally" that drew 800 students at SDSU: "I never thought I would live to see this day," he said.

The San Diego administrator would have been less surprised if he had been paying closer attention to what was happening in the United States. For just as the new mood had been building before the taking of the hostages, it had also been assuming more tangible forms than the waving of flags or the shouting of slogans. For example, support for increased spending on defense had been rising steadily since 1971 and had already reached a record high of 60 percent *before* the Iranian crisis erupted. A parallel increase of support for the use of force in defense of key American interests had also been showing up in the survey data during the same period. And long before Iran and Afghanistan, the debate over SALT II was revealing a degree of anxiety over the slippage of American power in relation to the Soviet Union that amazed even some of us who had been denounced as warmongers and Pentagon



apologists for pointing to the facts of the case only a few years ago.

### Requiem for the 60's

To some extent, the new mood represents a normal swing of the pendulum—in this instance, away from the hostility toward America that became so prevalent during the late sixties and early seventies. The ideas associated with this upsurge of hostility—that the United States was a sick society and a force for evil in international affairs—had for some years been coming under very effective fire from a group of intellectuals often labelled “neoconservative” but who might more accurately have been described as “neonationalists” in line with their highly positive view of the values implicit in the constitutional and institutional structure of American civilization and their belief that the survival of liberty and democracy requires a forceful American presence in the world.

In part, the “neoconservatives” became influential simply because they were able to beat their opponents on the Left in argument. But they were certainly helped along by a series of events that eroded the foundations of their opponents’ case. Thus, the idea that the American role in Vietnam had been immoral or criminal became harder and harder to maintain in the face of the horrors the Communists began visiting upon the peoples of Indochina following the defeat of the American effort to prevent Communist domination of that region. Similarly, the idea that the United States was the cause of the nuclear arms race—that the Soviet Union was only strengthening its nuclear arsenal in response to us—became harder and harder to argue as the Soviet Un-

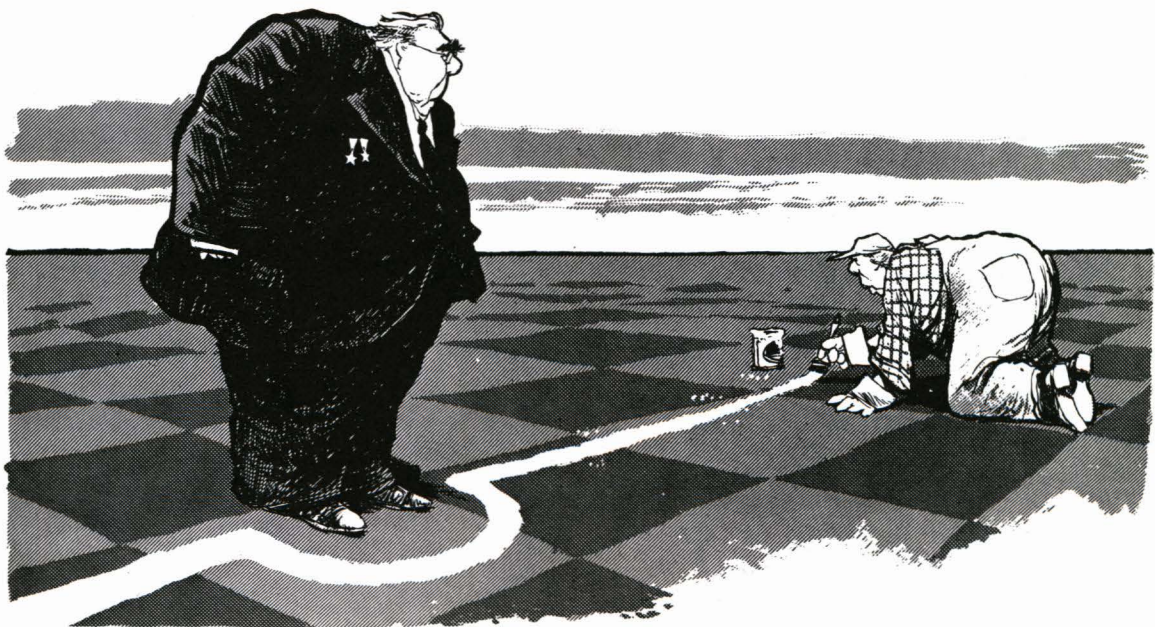
ion was permitted by the United States to achieve parity and then began pushing forward toward superiority.

From the perspective of those on the Left who regard the United States as a source of evil in international affairs, the decline of American power has been seen as a desirable development, diminishing the chances of intervention by a “counterrevolutionary” force whose domination over others prevents the emergence of a more peaceful and a more equitable world. On this point, too, events have been unkind to their leftist case. The withdrawal of American power from Indochina has not brought peace and justice but the spread of military aggression, totalitarianism, and genocide; and the voluntary surrender of nuclear superiority by the United States has resulted not in greater stability but in greater Soviet aggressiveness in the Middle East, in Africa, and even in Latin America.

Diehard efforts to deny all this—to blame the United States for crimes committed by the Communists in Cambodia and Vietnam after we left, or to rely on equally perverted reasoning to deny the facts of the Soviet military buildup—have fallen for the most part on deaf ears. So has the argument that the decline of American power is good for the United States—the theory here being that American power above a certain minimal level required to deter a nuclear attack on the continental United States has served no purpose other than to fatten the military-industrial complex, to foster illusions of “American omnipotence,” and to damage the economy. This theory acquired a certain popularity at the height of the Vietnam War, especially among the university young. But the inability of the United States to do anything about OPEC, or to respond with any-

MAILED  
REPRINTED/NEWS/LEADER ©1979 BY CHICAGO TRIBUNE.

Reprinted by permission of the Chicago Tribune-New York News Syndicate, Inc.





thing more than plaintive protests to threatening Soviet moves (including our inability to force the removal of a combat brigade in Cuba whose existence there the President himself had declared intolerable), or the contrast, evident even before Iran, between the treatment of our embassies and those of the Soviet Union—all this gradually began to demonstrate in remarkably vivid terms that there was a price to be paid for the decline of American power.

The seizure of the hostages in Iran, then, did not set off an overnight revolution in American public opinion. It served rather to crystallize a mood that had already been taking shape for at least five years.

### Impact on the 1980 Campaign

This new nationalist temper has already affected the 1980 presidential election to the extent of forcing all the candidates, even Kennedy, to come out for increases in the defense budget. (Kennedy's real announcement of his candidacy occurred not on the day he formally announced but on the day he voted for the 3 percent increase in defense spending.) It is also the new nationalism that made "leadership" so important an issue, again even before Iran.

The demand for "leadership" is a demand for a strong president, and a strong president is one who will see to it that the country is no longer "pushed around" and who will not hesitate to take action, including military action, in defense of the national interest. All this accords so well with the standard rhetoric of the Republican party, and is so at odds with the post-Vietnam ethos of the Democrats, that it is hard to see how either Carter or Kennedy (let alone Brown) could win against any of the major Republican candidates.

On the other hand, the Republicans have their own problems with the new nationalism. Despite their rhetoric, it was, after all, under Nixon and Ford and not under Carter that the retreat of American power began—a retreat blamed by Henry Kissinger on Democrats and liberals but nevertheless presided over by the last two Republican administrations. And as though to demonstrate that this Republican tradition of speaking loudly and carrying a small stick remains alive, most of the Republican candidates opposed the grain embargo against the Soviet Union after the invasion of Afghanistan (and they also opposed a reinstatement of the draft).

In short, the Republican claim to speak for a reassertion of American power may lack credibility. Therefore, just as in 1960 when John F. Kennedy managed to charge the Republicans with softness in foreign and defense policy, despite all the talk about the evils of communism by John Foster Dulles and Richard Nixon, the right Democrat could conceivably turn the same argument against the Republican candidate in 1980.

Yet on the showing of his past record, Kennedy is hardly in a position to do this plausibly, while Carter's new born hawkishness remains to be tested. Since

neither of the two leading Democrats who might be in such a position—Henry Jackson and Daniel P. Moynihan—seems to be a candidate, the Democratic opportunity to run against the record of Republicans in office as opposed to their usual campaign rhetoric, is likely to be lost.

If so, more than an electoral opportunity will have been forfeited. Thus far, the new nationalism which began with a defiant repudiation of hostility to America has moved on to a testy assertion of the right of this country to look after itself and its own interests. Translated into policy, this means continued and probably increased support for a stronger defense and a greater readiness to use force under certain restricted circumstances (such as the threat to our oil supply now covered by the Carter doctrine).

### A Larger Purpose

My own feeling, however, is that more is stirring in the current mood than a resentment at being "pushed around" or economic anxiety over oil. What I suspect we are seeing is a return of the repressed strain of internationalist idealism in the American character that Woodrow Wilson appealed to in seeking to "make the world safe for democracy" and that John F. Kennedy echoed when in his inaugural address he vowed that we would "pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardships . . . to assure the survival and success of liberty." It is indeed entirely possible that the early popularity of Edward Kennedy was based on the ill-formed impression that he would follow in the footsteps of his brother John in speaking for a powerful America. And it may also be that the decline in his popularity has stemmed from the belated public recognition that so far as foreign policy goes, Edward Kennedy has nothing in common with John except the surname.

The idea of making the world safe for democracy was discredited by the disillusionments of World War I, and a similar fate overtook Kennedy's reformulation as a result of the American defeat in Vietnam. But now that Vietnam is coming to be seen by more and more people as an imprudent effort to save Indochina from the horrors of Communist rule rather than an immoral intervention or a crime, the policy out of which it grew is also coming to be seen in a new light. That policy—of defending democracy wherever it already existed, and of holding the line against the advance of Communist totalitarianism, by political means where possible and by military means where necessary—was based on the idea that American interests in the long run depended on "the survival and the success of liberty" in the world as a whole. Are the American people looking for a rededication of the nation to that larger purpose? My guess is that they are, and it would be a great pity if they were not given an opportunity to say so in 1980 by a candidate who could appeal to their internationalist idealism and their hunger to be great again. □



# Iran & Afghanistan: Turning Points for America?

**Excerpts  
from  
interviews  
with:**

**William  
Bundy**

**Richard  
Goodwin**

**Tom  
Hayden**

**Samuel  
Huntington**

**Clare Boothe  
Luce**

**Donald  
Rumsfeld**

*The editors of Public Opinion recently conducted separate interviews with six individuals known for their views on foreign policy issues. All were asked the same questions: First, has the political landscape been transformed by recent events in Iran and Afghanistan, and if so, how? Second, was the seizure of the American embassy in Tehran a "hinge event"? And, in that context, is Vietnam behind us? Third, do you agree that there is a new consensus emerging in foreign policy today? Fourth, is there any candidate in either party who can successfully campaign against Carter on the foreign policy issue? And, finally, were we wrong about détente? Excerpts from these conversations follow.*



**BUNDY**

Recent events in Iran and Afghanistan have brought home a series of trends and developments that have concerned many of us in the foreign policy community for a long period of time. Both militarily and especially in its political dimension, the security of the Middle East area now presents the most serious challenges American policy has faced at

least since the Berlin crisis of 1958-1962.

Militarily, if you look back in history, you will see that there has never been a time when we had anything like a clear-cut superiority in the area of the Persian Gulf. There have been times in the past when our navy was totally unopposed in the Mediterranean. In 1958 we were able to land in Lebanon without any significant concern about opposition. But in the area of the Persian Gulf, it has always been a different story because the sea access routes are much longer and much more difficult. We've never had any situation where we've had serious operating bases within reach of the Persian Gulf area.

In the early sixties, we had two destroyers in Bahrain and that was the American presence in the Persian Gulf area even though American power was then supposedly at its zenith. So, the problems of adequate naval forces in the Indian Ocean area and the problem of adequate airlift capacity to move a division or two that distance and keep it supplied are not new. They need to be addressed, and we need to be moving ahead in the direction of the rapid deployment force that has been on the drawing boards for several years. Not a great deal appears to have been done about it.

It's still too early to say whether these events mean a definitive end to the reluctance to get involved overseas and to the great wariness about risks. To a considerable extent we are past Vietnam, but that scar still lingers on,



especially for young people in their thirties. Some of their caution and desire to know what our local and regional political underpinnings are, I might add, is constructive on the whole. For the political aspects of the present crisis are not critical. It is terribly important for the United States not to be out ahead of the sentiment of the other nations in the area, which, after all, are the most directly threatened. The outcome of the Islamabad Conference indicates that there is very strong opposition to the Soviet Union that could express itself in much more effective measures by these countries. If the United States were to appear to jump in and take over the show, it would have a very counterproductive effect in terms of attitudes.

On the domestic political landscape, the contest for the Democratic nomination has been transformed. The crises have been a tremendous help to President Carter and have created great difficulties for Edward Kennedy. Within his own party the President has the advantage of incumbency. In order to challenge him, one would have to move to positions that I doubt command majority support. That's what Edward Kennedy has been doing, and so far he has had little success.

As far as the challenges from the Republican side, we shall have to see what the future holds. I would say the crises have been some help to George Bush, because he has a string of titles in the foreign policy field, but it is much too early to say how it is all going to affect the final outcome of the election. If the President does a superior job of handling these crises, not merely in the short term, but in a longer pull, it will be very difficult to challenge him. Going back to Roosevelt in 1940, or to Eisenhower in the 1950s, or to many other times, we know that the incumbent benefits when the nation is under foreign pressure. The President is made to show that he can handle the crisis; it's harder for a challenger to truly challenge without putting himself out on a limb.

In response to the events of the day, we seem to be undergoing a general rethinking of the importance of country. This is true at all age levels, particularly at the college and school age level. Students ten years ago were disillusioned. ROTC programs were almost inconceivable on many campuses a decade ago, but now they're coming back, and they're being accepted.

The new consensus is a somewhat more assertive nationalism. But it's too early to say whether it will really persist when it comes to sacrifice. It's easy to cheer the boycotting of an Olympics. Although the boycott is very painful to some athletes, it doesn't cost anybody anything. It remains to be seen, however, whether we are really serious for the long run. I'm not sure that the bursts of feeling that we've had over the hostages and Afghanistan yet amount to the kind of dedication we are going to need for the long pull.

The Soviets, however, must be shaken by our immediate response to Afghanistan. Whether that will make them more stubborn and tough, or prompt them to lash back is still unclear. But they must have been truly disturbed by the impact. They must realize that with the United States taking as firm a position as it is, the chances are pretty good that that opposition will succeed and the Olympics will be cancelled—or become at most a shell. That will be the single most disturbing event for them in the short run, because the leadership will not be able to explain satisfactorily why most of the world community will simply not attend the Olympics in Moscow. In the long run, the cut-off of the 17 million additional tons of grain will also have an effect on their ability to build up their meat production and that, too, will hurt.

I don't think the American people ever believed that détente was suddenly going to change the whole nature of Soviet behavior, particularly when the Soviets had opportunities in the third world. Détente was certainly oversold in the very beginning by President Nixon, but it was not a mistake at all to pursue all the possibilities of cooperation that one could. One bad mistake of the seventies, however, was the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, which prevented the fulfillment of the trade agreement and therefore, the growth of economic ties. Most-favored-nation status would not have changed Soviet behavior in the short term, but it would have created future links that could have had a long-term salutary effect. Passing of Jackson-Vanik gave the Soviets the feeling with some justification that we hadn't been able to deliver on a presidential commitment.

I don't think détente is wholly dead today. It was worth pursuing from every standpoint, including our interest in the military balance and in pursuing

arms control agreements to the fullest. I hope we can get back on the track of negotiating arms agreements; otherwise enormous resources will be wasted to no good purpose.



**GOODWIN**

I don't believe that either Iran or Afghanistan in and of itself has been a hinge event, changing the way people think or governments act. Before they occurred, a substantial number of people were already calling for an increase in our defense capabilities. In effect, these latest developments have tapped an underlying fear and anger and have brought them to the surface.

The seizure of our embassy in Iran struck in particular at the already flagging pride of Americans who were tired of seeing their country pushed around and yelled at. It also provided a focus for the general frustration in the society.

Since the seizure, it has become a cliché to say that we've ended the Vietnam syndrome. I don't think Vietnam will ever be over. The reluctance to become involved overseas has been the most prominent, but it is only one of many reactions to Vietnam. We may also have learned a lesson there that we could not deal with a people with inadequate power and resources. There are other consequences, too. Whenever you begin to feel somehow inferior and threatened, you can become more aggressive or at least more worried about security. Vietnam has had that impact. Since the war, we've found it more difficult to negotiate any kind of disarmament treaty. So, the lessons of Vietnam are going to last a long time. It is burned into the memories and ideals of an entire generation of Americans now in their thirties. Vietnam will be as transforming an event for the third American century as the Civil War was for the second.

Whereas Iran struck several chords at home, Afghanistan is something that is very different. It's Soviet expansion. It is the first rupture of the post-World War II settlement, with the exception of Korea, which we did oppose by force. The Carter policy is very much in line



with what our policy has been from Truman on. Our reaction to Afghanistan is to wait to get the Russians out of there. In other areas, whether oil or economic policy or the fact that our value of the dollar is subject to decisions of foreign ministers, our economy is being held hostage. Although I'd like to see a healthy new nationalism emerging, I don't.

As long as two countries have a capacity to blow up each other and the world, I think it would be insane for us to stop working for some kind of understanding that would diminish that danger. Détente hasn't been a great success, but it is an effort worth making and continually making.

These events in Iran and Afghanistan have also dramatically shifted the focus of general attention from domestic problems—from the problems of inflation and the deterioration of our whole economic structure—to a perceived threat overseas in the Middle East. Foreign crises always divert our attention. The immediate political impact is to transform the debate from a debate on the strength of the nation internally to its relationship with the Soviet Union in the Middle East.

In this area and in his foreign policy, Carter is pursuing a dangerous policy because he has been erratic and he has scared people. When that happens, another candidate can tap that sentiment and campaign against it. It can be done, and in the next several weeks we will have a judgment on who might do it. As time goes by, however, the focus will go back toward our domestic problems since those are at the root of all our other difficulties.



**HAYDEN**

The events in Iran and Afghanistan have been an enormous bonanza for the right wing and the military-industrial complex because they are turning public opinion in that direction. I believe this is a temporary climate, but while it lasts, the President's fortunes have soared and those of Jerry Brown, Ted Kennedy and perhaps John Anderson have all suffered.

The course set by the President and his advisers is what C. Wright Mills used to call "crackpot realism." The return to the cold war—the only answer the military-industrial complex has to Soviet aggression—is the resurrection of a mindset that virtually bankrupted our economy, destroyed our national honor and killed hundreds of thousands of people around the world. That surely is no answer, especially when the logic of that kind of policy leads to a third world war.

We are in the beginning stages of a process that leads to war, and it will be war over the least honorable of trophies—the disappearing stocks of fossil fuel oil in the world. There has to be a saner way than that to have energy, to have a healthy economy, and to have international stability. Most people in this country don't want to fight a third world war for the oil industry.

There's also a discrepancy between the President's willingness to mobilize for war and to conscript young men and women into the military and his commitment to conservation and development of alternate energy sources. There can't be any lessening of international tension without a different energy policy here at home that stresses conservation and alternatives.

There are other ways to obtain oil and gas on this planet without risking a nuclear war in the Persian Gulf. We could develop oil and gas here in the United States if it weren't for the oil companies insisting on greater profits. Second, there is a substantial amount of gas in Mexico. We could have made some arrangement to obtain that gas on a long-term basis if it were not for the bungling of relations with Mexico by President Carter and Energy Secretary Schlesinger. There is also oil in Venezuela, Nigeria, and Vietnam. But we have chosen to conduct a foreign policy that makes those countries uncomfortable in seeing themselves as close U.S. allies. Our policies in Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia could have been designed to win the support of Mexico, Nigeria, and Vietnam. We could have had both a better foreign policy and long-term access to oil supplies. By long term, I mean ten to twenty years, a time period that would allow us to make a transition from fossil fuels to conservation and renewables without having to overburden the Middle East conflict—essentially a political problem—with the energy issue on top of it.

The most positive task we could try would be to construct a foreign policy that defines our national interests in a meaningful way so that people in this country know what is worth fighting for and what isn't. Many people are confused by Iran and Afghanistan, they're critical or outraged by events abroad, but at the same time, if they look beneath the surface of the outrage, they know that a return to the cold war, per se, is no answer. This confusion illustrates the lack of a defined American role in the world, or a definition of foreign policy as an alternative to either the cold war, or geographic isolationism. There's a void which those running for office haven't filled.

Our political process does not lend itself to the introduction of new ideas if they are at all complicated. You have to reduce complicated ideas to a buzz word, like "we need a better way," or "we need a new foreign policy." In the case of a McGovern or a McCarthy or a Robert Kennedy, there was a clear issue—the end of the Vietnam War—and a constituency had been galvanized around that issue.

Today let's say a Jerry Brown may have new ideas, but his dilemma is having to both define the cause and then claim himself as the standard-bearer. I'm not sure that American politics lends itself to that kind of task. I'm not particularly hopeful that we'll find a new foreign policy this year through the electoral process.

When one is in any way critical today, the right wing reflexively charges that the person is suffering from the Vietnam syndrome—that it's somehow unhealthy if one is overly influenced by Vietnam. But we need the Vietnam syndrome to continue for quite a while because the Kissingers, the Huntingtons, the Brzezinskis never learned a thing from the war. They have no interest in a future aside from what they built in the past. If they can't have the past, they will threaten the future.

It's very similar to the concept of the Watergate morality: some say if you become too critical or investigative of the White House, you are operating on an unfair standard of morality that weakens the presidency. This is simply a sophisticated call for censorship and resumption of the imperial presidency.

For instance, it was either the most irresponsible kind of bungling or some kind of conspiracy that I don't want to contemplate that allowed the Shah into



the United States when there was no medical reason for it. Further, the President was briefed that if the Shah came here, it was likely that the embassy in Tehran would be surrounded or overrun. Yet he brought the Shah in without reinforcing the embassy. He should have either left the Shah in Mexico, which I would have thought sensible, or if he was going to bring him in, he should have helicoptered our people out or reinforced the compound. Instead, he precipitated the Iranian hostage crisis. One thing led to another, and the Soviets then probably took our crisis in Iran as a sign of weakness in deciding that the time was ripe for invading Afghanistan.

We cannot have a peaceful foreign policy unless we do something about the economic power of the multinationals in the world and about our energy dependence on shaky dictatorships abroad. The answer may lie in our more positively engaging the developing nations about what they call a new international economic order. That is, a reconstruction of the international rules to allow for any improvement in the economic conditions of a majority of these countries, combined with an appropriate technology program abroad to deliver electricity and energy for space and water heating, so that we would at least have an economic and energy accompaniment to a human rights emphasis.

I have no problem with the human rights emphasis except I would note that most people who have trouble in the world are not in jail, they're simply starving to death. To put it sarcastically, they might be fed better if they were in jail. There are shrinking resources, and massive population increases, and terrible inequalities of the distribution of wealth and that simply sets the stage for a foreign policy trap in which we have to come to the aid of the sinking General Zias of the world. There's always a new general popping up. They last approximately three or four years and when they go down, our prestige goes down with them. That's no foreign policy; that's simply the old frontier policy of pulling the wagons around the campfire. It doesn't offer anything to the outside world and it seems to me to be absurd.

Our old idea in foreign policy—the idea of containment—was at least sold to the American public as the best way to defend Western Europeans, who were

supposed to be culturally and historically related to us and stand for democratic values. But we're now extending the concept of containment from humans to oil. I don't believe that President Carter or anyone else, including Brzezinski and Huntington, even plan to make a case that they believe the people of the Persian Gulf area are important to us. They don't even argue the human dimension. For them it's power blocs contesting for a precious resource. The first containment policy failed and the second one is taking us down the same cold war treadmill. You have to have an idea that people can get behind.

I'm counting on the fact that a majority of Americans will oppose a second cold war leading to a third world war and possibly a nuclear war.

If campus polls are any indication, between one-third and one-half of this student generation already oppose being drafted to fight for the dubious interests of the oil companies in the Persian Gulf. This is a stronger response by students to the draft than in 1965, and to me a very hopeful sign. The young people want conservation tried seriously instead of conscription.



**HUNTINGTON**

Until Iran and then Afghanistan, the central concerns on people's minds were inflation and energy. Now the political landscape has been transformed. The interesting question is whether this is a long-term change or whether there will be a shift back, and if so, when?

One has to look at Iran and Afghanistan separately to make an assessment. I don't think the embassy seizure represents a turning point. It is essentially in the category of a hijacking. It may be ended at any time, and it may be ended on agreeable terms or very disagreeable terms, but at some point it will be over. What is really significant is the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The consequences of that act are going to be around for a long time. It is an event of general significance—a hinge event, if you will.

The West Europeans, for instance,

draw a very fair line between Iran and Afghanistan when they say "Iran is *your* problem, even though we think it is outrageous. Afghanistan, however, is a threat to *our* interests as well as your interests." Consequently, they are much more willing to try to work out parallel or joint strategies for dealing with the Afghanistan situation than with Iran.

The big question in the minds of many Europeans, though, is how long will this assertive American posture last? They are asking themselves: What should we do as Europeans? As European governments? As a European community? Should we get out on a limb, will we be cut off? Will American opinion swing back in a different direction six months from now? This is the big question in their minds. My personal assessment is that the reaction to Afghanistan will last for a significant period of time.

I should add that I do not believe the Soviet decision to invade was a response to American flaccidity. I do not think that the Soviets perceive the President in those terms. After all, the administration was taking a tough line in terms of rebuilding our defenses, and reversing the unfavorable trend in the military balance that had prevailed in the previous decade. A collective decision of the NATO allies on theater nuclear modernization had also been made. Further, the Soviets were aware of the problems they confronted in the Senate on the SALT treaty. They had little to lose. You couldn't have gotten agreement within the Politburo unless there were a variety of different purposes which people there could see would be served by this action. Consequently, they supported it with different types of priorities and goals in mind.

In part, the invasion may have been a defensive action. The Soviets didn't want to have another fundamentalist, Islamic regime on their border. They didn't want to have a Communist government overthrown this way. They were also taking advantage of the opportunity which existed with our preoccupation with Iran. They saw this as a chance to get within 300 miles of the Indian Ocean.

Far more important than a perception of American weakness was the Soviet view that Afghanistan had for a couple of decades been recognized as a country with a neutralist regime in which the United States did not have a vital interest but one in which it was perfectly ap-



propriate for the Soviet Union, as a neighboring great power, to exercise a fair amount of influence. They acted to translate what had been indirect political influence into military control and at the same time, ensure that they didn't lose their political influence.



**LUCE**

The events in Iran and Afghanistan have awakened the American public to the threat which the Soviets pose to our economy and to our political independence. Whether the public is prepared to make the sacrifices necessary to change the situation is quite a different thing. For example, the opening sentence of the *Honolulu Advertiser's* editorial on the Carter Doctrine praised the President for alerting the American people to the seriousness of the situation in the Middle East without alarming them. But the editorial concluded by suggesting we mustn't lose sight of the social objectives to which we have given priority in the last years. Clearly, the seriousness of the situation had not yet been conveyed to the writers.

I'm not at all certain the President himself realizes how serious this situation is; if he does, he certainly has not communicated that to the people. I blame Mr. Carter for not realizing what the situation was three years ago. There isn't any question that Carter placed human rights and arms control at the very center of his foreign policy. Both are objectives and goals for which we must always strive, but in the context at that time, his emphasis was unrealistic. On the other hand, it is true that he was elected by a people who didn't want to face that situation and who still suffered from the Vietnam funk and the failure of nerve that followed Vietnam. He was following rather than leading the public. The people themselves hadn't made up their minds, and he hadn't made up his mind, and this was reflected in Carter's leadership. In my view, the people have still not made up their minds that we are on a knife's edge, poised to go either way.

Today, the American people do not understand that we cannot do what the

President has committed us to do. In his State of the Union message he has made an historic public commitment to defend the Persian Gulf with U.S. military forces. But if the Soviets move tomorrow, we could not give a very good account of ourselves. There is no way we can put troops in the Persian Gulf. We're facing one of the most powerful armies in the world and we must not respond with inadequate military force. We have to face up to the fact that we do not have the force and therefore we must not make idle threats. If we turn out to be bluffing this time, we have had it.

I'm very much interested in the fact that there's a movement among our allies to get together with us. But they will have to know we are not bluffing and that we really mean business this time. At first, you will recall, the Soviet brigade in Cuba was unacceptable, too, and suddenly we learned to live with it. When the Soviets hold out the peace branch, Carter accepts it. You cannot go on in life that way without losing your allies in the end. The big task facing the President now is to coordinate whatever responses we are about to make to the Soviets with our allies—the economic ones, the diplomatic ones, the military ones. This is of first importance.

Not only does Carter need to consult with our allies, he must make his intentions clear to the American people. No people, whether under a democracy, a tyranny, or a monarchy, will support a war if they do not know why they are fighting. They can only be driven to war for a certain length of time. It was a miracle that Americans stayed in Vietnam for as long as they did.

If the President tells people that the current crisis is a matter of life and death and that he will ask for a war powers resolution, a war production board, and so on, the American people will go along. By and large, the American people, if they are told that they must fight and if they are told reasons for it very clearly, will do so. There will be a certain amount of the kind of criticism we had when we entered World War II, but that is minor.

President Carter, however, has made no such commitment. He has merely said that we will defend the Persian Gulf against the intrusions by the Soviets. He has not taken the kinds of actions that lead one to believe he is totally serious, and you have to wonder

whether the Soviets themselves are convinced.

In a sense, the political landscape has been transformed by these events, but it is to the benefit of the incumbent President and not his challengers. If you look back through history and review the times of international tension, you will see that the president can outdo his opponents. The one thing a challenger cannot do is get on the peace side of a president. It's impossible. The president can move so much faster on the peace side than anyone else can. In the election of 1940, Wilkie had drawn blood with warnings that Roosevelt meant to take the country into war. Roosevelt then made the speech in which he assured mothers and fathers that their sons would not be sent to any foreign wars. Wilkie never recovered.

The real difficulty facing us today, and unfortunately I don't think Carter has what it takes to solve it, is that we must simultaneously confront the questions of energy and military power. We can't solve them, but we must ameliorate their effects. We must do them both together because without the energy, we will not have the military power or the productive capacity necessary to create it. Without the military power, we will not be able to protect our energy sources. Carter has a double-header on his hands, and nothing he says convinces me he realizes how serious it is.

I do not see a new consensus emerging in foreign policy that one would call nationalism. My own historic view of nationalism is that nations tend to become nationalistic in their times of affluence. But in their times of depression or economic difficulty, they want to stay home and lick their domestic wounds. It would be a very difficult thing for the United States to be nationalistic at this point.

What may be happening is the realization that if we do not pull ourselves together, this nation is likely to be in trouble. Part of it is that we're also coming to a new realization about détente. I think détente was a mistake. I used to try to defend Henry Kissinger, who insisted privately that U.S. morale had so collapsed as a result of Vietnam that the alternative to détente was a return to isolationism. There is no doubt that there was a tremendous yearning for isolationism. The United States might have bowed completely out of Europe. In that context, détente meant



keeping America operating on the world stage. At least that was the Kissinger line, and I had no better argument myself.

But détente was a mistake, and so was Vietnam. It was a terrible mistake, once in Vietnam, not to have finished it—either to have gotten out fast or fought to win. The net of all that was such disgust with our world position that we pulled out and then decided to have peace with the Soviets. From the day that détente happened, I felt it was a mistake.



**RUMSFELD**

Public opinion in the United States inevitably is affected by events such as Iran and Afghanistan. The most obvious thing that has occurred is that President Carter has moved up 20-40 points in the polls. This is a reflection of that positive American characteristic of wanting to rally around and support the country when events of the world seem dangerous and difficult.

It strikes me, however, that a president's real task is to avoid a crisis as opposed to getting points for managing a crisis that, in my judgment, his actions and inactions over the past three years contributed to. One cannot tie a string directly from his first three years in office and trace it to the Russian decision to invade Afghanistan; however, it does seem that his campaign pledge to cut the defense budget, the actions he took, for example, to halt production of the B-1, delay the MX and the Trident, and to reduce U.S. troop levels in Korea, created an environment that encouraged Soviet adventurism.

Further, President Carter's announcement that the existence of the Soviet combat brigade in Cuba was intolerable, followed by a behavior pattern that clearly suggested he was, and still is, willing to tolerate it, reinforced the impression that he as President is not going to take the steps necessary so that the United States will be capable of serving as a counter-weight to Soviet expansion.

The events in Iran and Afghanistan have been a turning point. Certainly the

American people, who watch television news, read the newspapers, and understand the extent to which nations are increasingly interdependent, are aware that ours is a dangerous and untidy world. They are increasingly sensitive to the fact that it is a less stable world. Events not involving American lives tend not to grip the country to the same extent as, for example, the seizure of the U.S. embassy in Iran. That event has clearly registered on the American people to a greater extent than did Angola, Yemen, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Cuba, or any of the other activities that the Soviets have been engaged in one way or another throughout the world in the past several years.

The American people have a basically good center of gravity. The problem we have today is that our current leaders have been so slow getting in front of their followers.

In 1974-1975, after reviewing the evidence of Soviet power, President Ford announced to the country that he was determined to reverse the adverse trends between U.S. and Soviet military capabilities and increase U.S. defense spending, pointing out that America's relative strength had declined because of the massive Soviet expenditures over the preceding decade. He saw that the United States was heading toward Soviet military superiority if those trends were not reversed, and that domestic spending would have to be controlled if we were to invest to reduce that threat. That was not a popular position at the time. Public opinion polls during the intervening period show that since that presidential leadership public support for adequate U.S. preparedness has steadily increased. His leadership helped to turn public opinion, and support for increased defense investment has been growing ever since. Events like Iran and Afghanistan obviously reinforce the judgment that President Ford made back in the mid-seventies.

There's no question that the policies of the last three years have been damaging to America. President Carter has been leading America in the wrong direction. It will take a period of years to repair the damage that has been inflicted on our country and the risks to stability in the world. Given our circumstances in the world today, the quality of executive leadership with respect to foreign policy and national security decision making is of funda-

mental importance. As such, the American people will properly be contemplating these matters as they consider their leadership for the next four years.

No one can look at the events that have occurred and not come to the conclusion that overall, the period of "détente" was a period of great advantage to the Soviet Union. During that period, the Soviets have engaged in one of the most massive arms buildups in history, including the investment, production, and deployment of weapons systems of all types. From the Glasboro Summit in 1967 and before, the United States did not invest at a rate sufficient to maintain our relative capabilities, given the amount the Soviets were investing. As a result, the U.S. ability to contribute to peace and stability in the 1980s has been greatly reduced.

During the period of détente Americans seemed to feel ambivalent about simultaneously competing and cooperating. They seemed to find it poor form to clink champagne glasses with Mr. Brezhnev and simultaneously invest sufficient funds to assure U.S. strength and our ability to contribute to a reasonably stable world. This reluctance to do both was not inevitable, but it in fact occurred. The hopes that were developed from détente and particularly the legacy of anti-defense feeling in our country as a result of the Vietnam War converged and stimulated the Congress to cut the U.S. defense budget repeatedly, year after year. The cumulative effect, given the simultaneous growing Soviet investment, was tremendously damaging. The Department of Defense estimates that in current year dollars, the Soviet Union outspent the United States in military expenditures by some \$240 billion. The weight and momentum of the Soviet military capabilities as a result of those vastly greater expenditures have led to a situation where any objective observer has to agree that the United States is in a position of vulnerability in the early and mid-1980s. Because lead times are long, and because of the damaging actions of the Carter administration during the past three years, that period of vulnerability for the United States has lengthened and deepened dangerously.

Clearly, it is past time for Americans to wake up and ensure that our nation is taken off this path toward weakness and set on a path that will enable us to contribute to peace in the decades ahead. ☐



## **The Hardening Mood toward Foreign Policy**

"Every time Europe looks across the Atlantic to see the American eagle," H. G. Wells once remarked, "it observes only the rear end of an ostrich."

In the wake of events in Iran and Afghanistan, Europeans must be rubbing their eyes, for there can be little doubt that after a long migration during the Vietnam period, the American eagle has reappeared. Its tail feathers may be ruffled, its talons blunted, but at least it's come home again.

Every scrap of evidence from opinion polls that have been taken in recent weeks—and the pollsters have had a field day—attests to the fact that Americans are in a much more assertive, even jingoistic mood. How long it will last and whether it suggests that the public will embrace true sacrifices remains to be seen; so far, not many politicians have been willing to ask for very much (for example, a new tax on gasoline whose proceeds would be earmarked for defense). But the mood now is stiffer than at any time since the early days of Vietnam.

In order to place recent poll results in perspective, it might be helpful to recall some of the twists and turns in opinion since the end of World War II. Clearly, some of the elements in today's mood have their roots in the early post-war era when there was a reasonably powerful consensus about America's posture in the world. A majority of Americans were agreed then that the United States enjoyed predominance over the Soviet Union, and they wanted to keep it that way. The containment of communism was frequently cited during the 1950s and the early 1960s as the single most important problem facing the United States. A large majority of Americans were also internationalist in outlook, favoring the export of American ideals as well as American goods—and foreign aid—to other coun-

tries. Self-confident, proud, ready to pay any price and bear any burden in the defense of liberty—those were the public virtues.

The war in Vietnam with all of its attendant agonies shattered that consensus, some thought for good. William Watts and Lloyd Free, in their surveys for Potomac Associates during the late 1960s and early 1970s, found a growing trend toward isolationism. Support for defense spending plummeted. Foreign aid joined welfare spending as the most unpopular items in the federal budget. The idea of sending troops abroad was scorned, and when support for the draft melted away, the concept of an all-volunteer army won scores of converts. Détente, not containment, became the new password, as Americans yearned for "a full generation of peace."

### **Building a New Consensus after Vietnam**

Yet, as memories of Vietnam receded and as the fruits of détente turned sour, there was increasing evidence during the late 1970s that a new consensus was emerging in foreign affairs—even before the seizure of American hostages in Tehran. Consider:

- Between 1974 and November 1978, there was a 22 percent increase—from 33 percent to 55 percent—in the number of people telling interviewers for national polls sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations that they thought the United States "ought to play a more important role as a world leader in the future."

- In June 1978, a 53-30 percent majority told interviewers for CBS News/*New York Times* that the United States "should get tougher in its dealings with the Russians."

- The most dramatic shift occurred on defense spending: in 1971, 49 per-

cent said they wanted to decrease defense spending and 11 percent wanted to increase it; in the fall of 1979—before the Tehran seizure—support for a 3 percent increase in defense stood at 60 percent while only 9 percent opposed it.

The reasons for this toughening of attitudes are not hard to determine. By late 1978, Americans were firmly of the view that the United States was less respected in the world than a decade earlier (58 percent), that the United States was falling behind the Soviets in power and influence (56 percent), and that the United States was playing a less important role as a world leader than a decade earlier (a 44 percent plurality).

Some commentators concluded from these polls that the United States was beginning to return to its pre-Vietnam stance, but there were notable differences. For one thing, Americans in the late 1970s were decidedly less anti-Soviet and more pro-American than twenty years earlier. No longer was the containment of communism seen as the number one concern or even the number one goal of foreign policy. In the survey sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations in late 1978, the three most important goals of U.S. foreign policy all related to improvements in life here at home: keeping up the value of the dollar, securing adequate supplies of energy, and protecting the jobs of American workers. (All ranked above 80 percent.) "Containing communism" was fifth on the list (64 percent) and the protection of weaker nations against foreign aggression ranked twelfth (37 percent). As Daniel Yankelevich concluded in the spring of 1978: "... the leadership role that the public seeks today bears little resemblance to the crusading spirit of the 1950s and the early 1960s. . . . The current mood can



... be described as one of cautious internationalism—the spirit of idealism has been rekindled; some of the old jingoism has been revived; but as Americans move out of the Vietnam period into a new era of foreign policy, their mood is tempered above all by sobering caution.”

### Impact of Iran and Afghanistan

In this context, public reaction to Iran and Afghanistan seems less of a hinge event in American opinion—as some have suggested—than a strengthening and acceleration of trends that were already under way. Several different examples bear out this view:

- Prior to the invasion of Afghanistan, polls were already showing support for higher defense spending rising above 50 percent. After the invasion, several surveys showed that those majorities increased to about two-thirds of the population.

- Between 1977 and the spring of 1979, support for reinstitution of the draft rose from 40 to 49 percent, according to Gallup. After Iran and Afghanistan, polls found over 60 percent calling for the draft. (Views were split on the drafting of women.)

- Between 1974 and 1978, negative attitudes toward the CIA began to melt away and the number who believed that the agency should work inside other countries “to strengthen those elements that serve the interests of the United States” rose from 43 to 59 percent. After the Iranian seizure, some 79 percent told ABC News/Louis Harris that they wanted to overhaul and step up the activities of the CIA.

- In 1978, as noted earlier, the number who wanted to get tougher in dealing with the Soviets had risen to 53 percent; in January of this year, some 67 percent supported that proposition.

So far, the polls have not shed much light on which groups within society have changed their views most dramatically. One simply cannot tell, for example, whether the movements have been sharpest among men or women, young or old, etc. What is striking from the data that have been published is the fact that even self-identified liberals are now taking fairly hawkish positions. For example, the AP/NBC News survey team found that the number of liberals supporting higher defense spending rose from 47 percent in December 1979 (before the Afghanistan invasion) to 67 percent in January 1980 (after the inva-

sion). Moreover, in the wake of Afghanistan, liberals favored the resumption of the draft by a 56-38 percent majority and the drafting of women by a 50-41 percent majority (conservatives opposed the drafting of women, 44-42 percent). Since the liberal community was once strongly internationalist in outlook—and then became the breeding ground for much of the antiwar movement—this most recent shift in sentiment could be one of the most important effects of Iran and Afghanistan.

### How Willing to Use Force?

Perhaps the most difficult question to answer about current attitudes toward foreign policy is the extent to which people are now prepared to use force to settle international disputes. As Everett Ladd points out in the Opinion Round-up section of this issue (see page 25), Americans in the 1950s and early 1960s were generally assertive about foreign policy but were rarely bellicose. The Vietnam conflict made the public even less willing to send American forces overseas to countries such as Angola. In recent years, however, there has been some evidence that the pendulum was swinging back to the center and Iran and Afghanistan have apparently served to accelerate that trend.

The defense of Western Europe is a case in point. In 1974, only 39 percent of Americans felt the invasion of Western Europe would justify United States military involvement. As Vietnam memories faded, the number who took that view rose to 43 percent in July 1978 and was measured at 54 percent in November 1978. A post-Afghanistan survey by AP/NBC News showed that fully two-thirds of the population (67 percent) would now favor U.S. troops fighting the Soviets if the Russians invade Western Europe.

Yet, the desire—or even the willingness—to send in the marines still seems murky at best. In the cases of both Afghanistan and Iran, interviewers for CBS/*New York Times* found this January that there was much greater support for economic and diplomatic pressures than for military force: approximately two-fifths of the population wanted to employ the nonmilitary tools, less than a fifth favored a military response, and two-fifths wanted to “hold off for now.” In the case of Iran, Lou Harris found a sizable drop-off in support of military retaliation in the first six weeks after the seizure. In the case

of Afghanistan, a *Time*/Yankelovich poll this January found that 74 percent favored U.S. military bases in the Middle East but only 57 percent wanted to send military aid to the rebels in Afghanistan (the poll did not ask about sending in U.S. troops).

Some survey units also report conflicting evidence about the willingness to use American troops to protect the oil lanes in the Middle East. In November 1979 (post-Iran, pre-Afghanistan), the *Washington Post* found that a 49-39 percent majority expressed disagreement with the proposition that the United States “should take all steps, including the use of force if necessary, to insure that we have an adequate supply of oil from the Middle East.” A second *Post* poll, taken after the invasion of Afghanistan and just after the President’s State of the Union declaration about the Persian Gulf, found that opinion had sharply turned so that a 52-38 percent majority now favored use of U.S. forces to protect the oil lanes. On the other hand, Bob Teeter of Opinion Market Research, reports that in his post-Afghanistan surveys, majorities continue to oppose the use of American force in nearly all instances, including the protection of the Persian Gulf area. Thus, on the basis of the evidence, one is hard-pressed to say that the recent change of attitudes toward foreign policy has yet translated into a willingness to send American troops into conflict, absent a very clear threat to vital national interests.

One other uncertainty should be pointed out about the current state of opinion. The merging within the public mind of the Iran and Afghanistan affairs clearly triggered an upsurge of concern about foreign affairs, so that polls this January showed that for the first time since 1972, foreign policy was the number one concern in the country. As that occurred, attitudes toward foreign policy issues obviously hardened. By mid-February, however, several polling organizations were reporting that preoccupation with foreign affairs was slipping and that inflation had reasserted itself. What remains unclear as this issue goes to press is whether attitudes might now change again. The heightened sense of national pride is still there—witness the public euphoria over the U.S. Olympic hockey team—but whether the American eagle will once again turn into an ostrich is yet to be seen.

—D.R.G.





by Thomas E. Cronin

# Looking for Leadership, 1980

**E**very four years, Americans search the national landscape for a new superstar, a storybook figure who is blessed with the mind of a Jefferson, the courage of a Lincoln, the grace of a John F. Kennedy. This year, that quest has seemed more earnest than at any time in recent memory, and one candidate after another has proclaimed that he alone offers true "leadership for the 80's."

But what do Americans mean when they invoke the elusive, hard-to-define concept of leadership? Why have the very men who were singled out early in this campaign as the strongest leaders been among the first to falter? And if the more charismatic possibilities like Edward Kennedy have tumbled from their pedestals, where does that leave the idea of leadership for the future? Those are some of the questions discussed here.

## A Yearning for Dynamic Presidents

The American presidency may not have exactly been designed in 1787 as a leadership institution (certainly not as a party, legislative, or economic leadership post), but all that has vastly changed. Our foremost theorists of the presidency now repeatedly dwell on the pervasive yearning for dynamic leadership. According to Clinton Rossiter, "it may well be argued that one of the decisive forces in the shaping of American democracy has been the extraordinary capacity of the presidency for strong, able, popular leadership." James MacGregor Burns calls for what he terms a transforming leadership that can grasp the real needs, wants, and higher aspirations of the American people and make our huge, fragmented system of government serve those needs and aspirations. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. writes that our so-called three branch system in fact "has worked best as a presidential system. Only strong presidents," he adds, "have been able to overcome the tendency toward inertia inherent in a structure so cunningly composed of

checks and balances." In his classic, *An American Dilemma*, Gunnar Myrdal said that the demand for intelligent leadership is constantly being raised in all political camps. But for what kind of leadership? Myrdal described it as follows: "What Americans display in their demand for leadership are primarily the general traits of their culture which may be referred to as individualism and romanticism. The ordinary American has a liking for the personal and dynamic in collective activity, a longing for the uniquely human, the unexpected, the adventurous. He wants changes, and he likes to associate them with new faces. He hopes for individuals to step out of the mass, to find the formulas for directing the course of events, to take the lead."

As the opening guns sounded in the 1980 presidential race, a yearning for fresh leadership seemed uppermost in the minds of both the people and the candidates. Only four years earlier, in the aftermath of Watergate and Vietnam, people apparently longed for honesty, compassion, and a folksy, common man touch—a touch that Jimmy Carter seemed best able to provide. But as we entered this year's campaign, the demand for "honesty" receded when compared to other qualities sought in the White House. In late 1979, for example, the Gallup organization asked, "What do you think is the most important thing a President should be able to do?" Here's what they found:

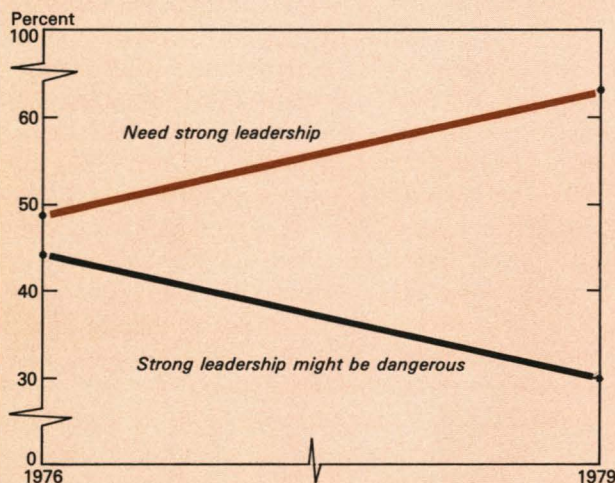
Strong leader	24%
Work with Congress	17%
Solve economic problems	17%
Have people's confidence	14%
Run the country	13%
Foreign affairs	9%
Keep peace in the world	8%
Have the power, ability to get things done	8%



Public answers to poll questions are open to considerable ambiguity. But they do indicate the broad public mood on certain problems or issues, and they are even more helpful when the same question is asked at separate intervals over time, thus giving us rough approximations of trends in attitudes. In 1976, *Newsweek* magazine asked an admittedly ambiguous but nonetheless provocative question about presidential leadership, and Gallup then repeated the question in late 1979. The results are especially interesting:

**Figure 1**

**Question:** Some people think that what this country needs is some really strong leadership that would try to solve problems directly without worrying how Congress and the Supreme Court might feel. Others think that such strong leadership might be dangerous. What do you think?



**Source:** Surveys by *Newsweek* magazine, February 27-29, 1976; the Gallup Organization, September 28-October 6, 1979 for WHYY, Inc., Philadelphia-Wilmington in connection with "Every Four Years," a three-part study of the American presidency, produced for PBS.

At the same time, pollsters repeatedly found in early and mid-1979 that Americans were dissatisfied with the leadership provided by Jimmy Carter. For example, in July 1979, an overwhelming majority of Americans said they had lost confidence in the brand of presidential leadership they were getting. Nearly three-fourths of those interviewed felt the incumbent "may well not have the competence to do the job." Even more people told the Louis Harris polling organization that Jimmy Carter did not know how to follow through effectively on the programs he proposed. A still higher proportion (88 percent) said they believed Carter still did not have the experience to bring to bear on getting the job done.

Competence, follow-through and experience (and

one might add, the capacity to handle the Congress) seemed to be the factors that, added together, led people to say that Carter was failing as a leader. By mid-summer, 1979, an NBC-AP telephone opinion survey found that 66 percent of a nationwide sample thought Carter was a weak or very weak leader. Further, the same poll found that most Americans blamed Carter for every aspect of the country's worsening economic conditions. Thus, 78 percent said that Carter was at least "partly to blame" for continued inflation; 68 percent said he was partly to blame for higher prices on energy; and 61 percent faulted him for gasoline shortages. These and related findings all pointed to the old adage: when things go wrong, make the president the scapegoat.

### Rushing Into the Breach

So it was that the chief contenders for Mr. Carter's title charged into what they believed to be a political vacuum. John Connally was the first to hit the ground running, distributing great quantities of literature and posters that boldly announced: "Connally: Leadership for America." In his appearances, Connally simply asserts, "I can move the country." Jaw jutting forward, he adds that Carter "can't move anybody, he moves himself and has difficulty doing that."

Candidate George Bush has come at the issue more indirectly, stressing his experience not only in business and in Congress, but in many party and executive branch positions as well. For Bush, leadership is competence and he is convinced he has proven his competence and thus has just as much claim to leadership as former Governors Connally and Ronald Reagan or Senate Minority Leader Howard Baker.

Senator Kennedy, like Connally, has been much more explicit in his condemnation of President Carter's leadership abilities. Explaining why he had joined the fray, Kennedy has said that for three years he "tried to support my fellow Democrat, President Carter. But," he adds, "I am deeply convinced that our beloved country can no longer afford to drift along without clear, decisive, knowledgeable leadership in the White House." As he began his own campaign, this is how Ted Kennedy put it:

In his July (1979) speech on energy, President Carter spoke of a loss of confidence and purpose in the American people and the spread of greed and materialism.

I refuse to believe that. I refuse to accept it. . . .

I believe that our problem today is not malaise but mismanagement—not despair but lack of directed effort.

As each new candidate entered the fray, the temptation to whack away at the leadership issue was irresistible. Yet, one of the most striking developments of the campaign so far has been the fact that the three men



who most seemed to exemplify leadership—at least, as shown by polls—have been among the first to stumble on the track.

No one, for example, looks more like a leader than John Connally, and the early polls along with copious contributions from the boardrooms and a large number of magazine cover stories—seemed to confirm his muscular attractiveness. But his style may have been precisely his problem (or at least one of them). Might he be too tough, too domineering, too bellicose? Some people viewed him as downright dangerous. His party switch in the early 1970s and the milk fund case added to the view that he was manipulative and perhaps uncontrollable. Connally is clearly a man of experience, but much of his experience has been gained as an apprentice to LBJ and Richard Nixon. Were we ready yet to elect a protégé of those men? Somehow, he looked and sounded like LBJ and reminded us of Nixon—all at the same time. For him, then, the aura of leadership quickly turned out to be a two-edged sword.

Ronald Reagan, of course, has been a *leading man* in the Republican party for quite some time, and, as the 1980 campaign opened, he was widely cited by the voters for his decisiveness and leadership qualities. Two 1979 surveys by *Time*/Yankelovich found that Reagan and Kennedy were thought to have the highest leadership qualities of all the candidates—and that fully half of the Kennedy supporters also found Reagan to be acceptable as president.

In the 1980 race, however, Reagan has had to run with two burdens—the burden of being the front-runner through the early months and the burden of

his age. So much media attention has been given to his age that it sometimes seems he is 89, rather than 69. Could he serve two full terms? it is asked. Do we want a man in his seventies for the problems of the 80's? And so on. Still, Reagan "Let's make America great again," has overcome some initial setbacks to recapture his lead in the party.

### The Rise of the Kennedy Balloon . . .

By far the most interesting story, however, was that of Ted Kennedy. Here was a man, who, only a few months ago, was smashing nearly every record in the public opinion polls—he had the largest lead over any incumbent in polling history, the largest lead over the rivals in another party, the strongest pre-position of any Kennedy, etc. Many theories have been suggested for his decision to enter the race: his family's legacy, the urging of Democratic officeholders in the Congress, the urgings from fellow liberals, fear of a Republican takeover, and others. But perhaps the most persuasive reason is that Americans seemed to be calling him. Nearly twice as many Democratic and Independent voters told Lou Harris in the fall of 1979 that in a crisis Kennedy could be counted on more than Carter; by a 70-21 percent margin, they said Kennedy would inspire more confidence in the White House; by a 62-26 percent margin, Kennedy was thought to be more competent to handle the duties of the presidency. Moreover, Kennedy's standing with the public had shown a dramatic upturn since the early 1970s, when he was still under a Chappaquiddick cloud. (See Table 1.) Kennedy, no doubt, was impressed and perhaps

**Table 1**  
**EDWARD KENNEDY PROFILE**

	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
<b>He has the personality and leadership qualities a president should have</b>			
October 1979	72%	23%	5%
June 1979	67	26	7
1978	63	29	8
1975	52	34	14
1974	49	42	9
1973	39	44	17
<b>He is one of the few people willing to take courageous stands on basic issues facing the country</b>			
October 1979	68	27	5
June 1979	69	25	6
1978	68	25	7
1975	X	X	X
1974	X	X	X
1973	50	33	17
<b>He could give the country the kind of inspired leadership we need</b>			
October 1979	64	30	6
June 1979	55	35	10
1978	X	X	X
1975	44	38	18
1974	40	45	15
1973	36	43	21

Source: Surveys by ABC News/Louis Harris and Associates, latest that of October 1979.



moved to reconsider his noncandidacy. After all, wasn't it both unpatriotic and arrogant to refuse to let your name be considered for the office if two-thirds of your constituency seemed so eager to have you run?

With this background, Kennedy's subsequent plunge in the polls was one of the most remarkable reversals in modern American politics. No one—not even Jimmy “I'll whip his ass” Carter—anticipated Kennedy's winter of discontent.

### ... And Why It Deflated

There is no single or profound explanation. Plainly, of course, the overriding factor was that the Iranian and Afghanistan crises undercut Kennedy's prime strategy of portraying Carter as weak. The rally-round-the-President-in-a-foreign-crisis syndrome came into effect, as Carter scored an unprecedented rise of more than 30 points in his Gallup approval rating. To criticize the President, even implicitly, for permitting the Shah to enter the country also cut against the grain, even though large numbers of Americans have since come to agree with Kennedy's harsh criticisms of the Shah.

Countless Iowans who went to the January caucuses were heard to say, “It would be unpatriotic to vote now against Jimmy Carter.” It was not so much that Carter had discovered how to be a *leader*, nor did people suddenly perceive him to be gifted and forceful. Rather, they hoped somehow that he would rise to the occasion, they wished him the best, and they didn't want to weaken his hand at this moment of urgency, for he was the only president we had. Some of Carter's campaign commercials put it very cleverly, “President Carter—he's fighting for all of us.”

Still, there are almost as many additional or secondary explanations for what happened to Kennedy as there are political pundits. Not all of them are persuasive; some may be unfair; some could look unfounded if, in this most volatile of political years, Kennedy's fortunes were to rise. But it is instructive to review some of the hypotheses:

1. *The Roger Mudd Stumble Thesis*: There are those who have classified Ted Kennedy's sometimes tongue-tied and lackluster fall interview in the same category with George Romney's famous “I was brainwashed” statement, with Senator Muskie's crying in Manchester, with Gerald Ford's instant “liberation” of Poland, and with George McGovern's “I'm behind you 1000 percent” reassurance to Tom Eagleton. In an age when the media are sure to amplify a candidate's weak moments, the Mudd interview instantly put Kennedy on the defensive. The point is that a president or would-be president is not supposed to be unprepared or inarticulate, and on the Mudd show, Kennedy was both. He was even unable to answer the obvious question of why he wanted to be president.

2. *The Media as Leveler Thesis*: Unwittingly or not, the media often levels front-running candidates. In a variation of the adversary relations theme, it is as if

the press and television have a greater obligation to probe, scrutinize, and pick apart the latest celebrity. Pulitzers don't go to journalists who deflate dark horses, but to those who expose the leaders. Hence, the notion of the primaries as a multi-media survival course, perhaps better suited to knocking people off than permitting the best to rise. Hence, too, the notion, popular among some Kennedy followers, that their man was the first to suffer fatal wounds at the hands of the press this year.

3. *The Ted Didn't Want It Thesis*: Columnist Ellen Goodman contended in January that Ted Kennedy simply didn't want the presidency enough to do what was needed. Thus the tentative effort. Thus the lack of preparation. Thus the absence (until his Georgetown University speech) of fire-in-the-belly. Even at Georgetown, which turned out to be one of the most skillfully crafted speeches in a long while, Kennedy was compelled to proclaim, “I have only just begun to fight.”

4. *The “His Time Has Come... And Gone” Thesis*: Kennedy may win praise for bold stands, but his entry came at precisely the time that the national mood was moving in the opposite direction. Perhaps Americans still favor the concept of national health insurance. But they also want federal spending limits for social and domestic programs; they want increases in defense; they want stronger diplomatic gestures. Kennedy, of course, knew he was moving against the mainstream, and he tried to turn it to his advantage. “Sometimes a party must sail against the wind,” he declared. But could it be that the old Democratic coalition of the 1960s is no longer viable for the 1980s?

5. *The Chappaquiddick Won't Go Away Thesis*: Kennedy supporters clearly hoped that a decade was long enough to let the issue disappear, but the William Safires, *Reader's Digests*, *Washington Stars* and countless others (including millions of voters) would not oblige. Chappaquiddick was indeed revived successfully, and Kennedy himself exacerbated his problems by incoherent responses to Roger Mudd. More important, in their search for leadership, Americans look for coolness, grace, and alert judgment in would-be presidents. They want someone who displays character and competence in crises, but Safire and others skillfully played that issue against Kennedy. Could it be, people wondered, that Teddy was at his best only when the going was good?

6. *The Presidents Look Bad until Their Fourth Year Thesis*: Another proposition holds that during their first three years in office, presidents are compared to the legendary incumbents complete with myth and glory. But, in their fourth year, most of our presidents begin to look better as they are compared to mortal, real-world alternatives. Gerald Ford's stock rose appreciably as he was compared to Carter in 1976. So, too, Carter receives a new appreciation as he is contrasted with Reagan, Connally, Brown, and Kennedy instead of our sugar-coated memories of Washington, Jefferson,



Lincoln, and the Roosevelts.

7. *The He Shouldn't Have Run against an Incumbent Thesis:* Practiced politicians dislike intraparty feuds, the more so when their party occupies the White House. They well remember 1912, 1952, 1968, and 1976. Divide the party, they cry, and concede the election. Moreover, no one this century who has challenged an incumbent of his own party has won the race to the White House. Pragmatists often go by the slogan, "we want a chance, not a choice."

8. *The Ted Is Not Like John or Bob Thesis:* Another theme frequently sounded is that in full light of day, Ted doesn't measure up to the Kennedy standards of yore. However unfair, many of his would-be supporters now feel let down. Old loyalists were dismayed at the quality of his campaign organization. A Kennedy student worker in Iowa heard him speak there and lamented, "I don't think he said a damned thing." People concerned with economics or energy contend that his statements are a hodgepodge. A ready-for-Teddy hopeful in Tennessee told this writer in January:

While I didn't exactly expect a Jack, I expected a Bobby. I wanted Teddy to be a galvanizer who could make the country sit up and take issues seriously. I expected him to *inspire*, to excite, to be more than an ordinary candidate. . . . In 1968 Bobby made life exciting and you felt that politics was vital and important. But in these past few months Ted has shown me nothing of that quality. Frankly, I feel let down, disappointed, betrayed. . . .

If Jack had an eloquence and a sense of history, Bobby's electricity caused sparks to fly. Both had a capacity to enlarge upon visions of a more exhilarating future—

or so our memories would have it. Doubtless Ted was forced to run not only against Carter but also against the memories of his brothers—perhaps even as a myth in search of a candidate?

### Perceptions of the Past

This last hypothesis is reinforced by a good deal of survey data about past presidents. Pollsters in recent years have on several occasions asked the public to rate the performances of previous chief executives. In 1977, for example, Louis Harris and Associates, asked respondents to rate the past seven presidents, stretching from FDR to Ford. On seven different traits—doing the best job in the White House, most personally appealing, best in domestic policy, etc.—John F. Kennedy came out either first or tied for first. (For full results, see *Public Opinion*, October/November 1979, page 24.)

In October of 1979, as part of a study of the presidency produced for public television, the Gallup organization asked a national sample of Americans: "Of all the Presidents we have ever had, who do you wish were President today?" Thirty-three percent—*twice as many as for any other choice*—selected John F. Kennedy as their first choice. Sixteen percent said they wished FDR were president, 13 percent preferred Truman, and only 2 percent named Carter. JFK was especially popular among younger respondents, FDR more popular among those over sixty-five.

The Gallup interviewers probed more deeply to find out what qualities of past presidents were favorably remembered, and found that people cited Kennedy as a "strong leader," a "decisive" figure, someone who showed "concern for the average citizen," and also one who was able to build the "confidence of the people." Roosevelt was praised for strong leadership, "ability to get things done" and for his talent for coming up with policies and programs to handle the Depression. Truman, not surprisingly, was admired for his "forthright, outspoken" quality, his honesty, and his forcefulness.

Of course, what appeals to people as "presidential" varies from one election to the next. Courtly Warren Harding, they said, looked every inch a president. Looks, however, are deceptive. JFK looked too young or boyish. Truman looked too ordinary. Lincoln doubtless looked too awkward and homely. And Ted? Well, last summer Ted looked like a "leader," but after getting a late start and running against Rose Garden Jimmy, it's been a hell of a winter.

### A Flow of Contradictory Demands

Where, then, does Kennedy's deflation leave the search for leadership today? Clearly, Americans are of more than one mind. A majority continue to say that they yearn for more forceful, decisive displays of presidential leadership. But if there now seems to be a reiteration of the old saw: "Don't Just Stand There, Do Something!," it is well to remember de Tocqueville's wise



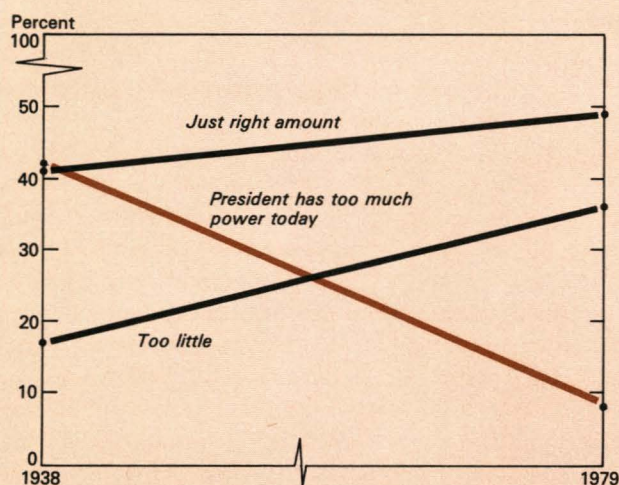
"Are you ready for leadership?"

Drawing by C. Barsotti; © 1979 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.



**Figure 2**

**Question:** Do you think the President has: too much power, too little power, or just the right amount today?\*



	1938	1979
Too much	42%	8%
Too little	17	36
Just right	41	49
Don't know	—	7

**Note:** \*In 1938 the question wording was: "Would you like to see the President have more or less power?" While not directly comparable, the two sets of data do indicate the broad difference in opinion between FDR's times and the present.

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization, 1938; the Gallup Organization, September 28-October 6, 1979 for WHYY, Inc. Philadelphia-Wilmington in connection with "Every Four Years," a three-part study of the American presidency, produced for PBS.

observation that Americans are a people who want to be led, yet also want to be free and to be left alone. Put another way, our favorite presidents may be those who have been assertive, flex-the-muscle types (Jackson, Lincoln, FDR, Truman), but in the tradition of Thomas Paine, we have never wanted to concentrate large reservoirs of power in our central government, let alone in any single office. Thus we see the oft-repeated backswing from activist presidents to minimal or caretaker ones.

At the same time, we place enormous demands on our presidents. In a recent survey, some 73 percent acknowledged that the public "expects more of a President today than in the past." In the mid-sixties, shortly before he died, John Steinbeck observed:

We give the President more work than a man can do, more responsibility than a man should take, more pressure than a man can bear. We abuse him often and rarely praise him. We wear him out, use him up, eat him up . . . and we exercise the right to destroy him.

Yet, Watergate, Vietnam and countless similar episodes have also made many Americans more skeptical of national leaders. We are quicker to challenge, disbelieve and even snicker. True, Americans have always been irreverent and disrespectful, but one wonders whether a president today can get a fair hearing. Cynicism and fatalism sap the will. Are we willing to give support to a president who is acting on important matters with wisdom and courage?

### What's Needed in the 80's

In my judgment, the 1980s will be shaped by people and by presidents who have confidence in themselves and can radiate confidence in the nation. It's been said that the most significant breakthroughs are made by people with a touch of irrational self-confidence. Overstated, perhaps, yet people who are overcome by anxieties, self-doubt or timidity are seldom called upon to lead. Illustrative of the buoyant, bullish, up-beat tone that is now being sought was the slogan Robert Kennedy left us from his 1968 campaign:

This is surely a time of uncertainty, a time of danger—but the times are more open to the creative energy of men than any other time in history.

That kind of confident optimism has thus far been missing in this presidential campaign. There is in the air considerable self-doubt; the mood is almost one of

**Table 2**  
**PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OR QUALITIES  
DESIRED IN A PRESIDENT**

**Question:** Here is a list of personal characteristics or qualities. Would you read off all of those which you feel are important for a President to have?

	Total mentions
Placing Country's Interest Ahead of Politics	83%
Sound Judgment in Crisis	82
Intelligence	82
Taking a Firm Stand on Issues	75
Competence, Ability to Get Job Done	74
Compassion, Concern for Little Man/Average Citizen	70
Experience in Public Office	69
Ability to Anticipate the Nation's Needs	68

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization, September 28-October 6, 1979, for WHYY, Inc., Philadelphia-Wilmington, in connection with "Every Four Years," a three-part study of the American presidency, produced for PBS.



premature self-defeat. Who shall provide the leadership? One recalls Carl Sandburg's musings:

Who shall speak for the people?  
Who has the answers?  
Where is the sure interpreter?  
Who knows what to say?

Of special importance today is the need for our leaders to make the most of their unique opportunities in the "bully pulpit"—to clarify the issues and the choices, to educate and persuade, to rally support around what needs to be done. A few of our recent presidents—one thinks of FDR and JFK—did this well. Their leadership had a morale-building element to it. They conveyed a sense of hope. They communicated optimism.

The best of our past presidents have known the importance of morale-building and of reaffirming the nation's higher purposes. The best of our presidents are able to encourage the tremendous forces for good at large in the country. They have been endowed with a gift for teaching, with oratorical skills, with self-confidence, and with a sense of history, of humor, and of timing. Today, the bully pulpit—amplified as it is by the remarkable electronic opportunities of the age—beckons once again.

Leadership, however, is not the same thing as speechmaking. Perhaps the most frequently made error is the way that pundits tab one person a leader because

he speaks well and another hopeless because of uneven speaking abilities. Some commentators also confuse leadership with glib television answers. Television too often rewards the clever wit but penalizes the reflective thinker. Early in an election year, with visions of a nine-foot tall de Gaulle or a Churchill at the Battle of Britain, our hunger for strong leadership may be satiated by promising oratory. But as the campaign develops, the public wants to know about a candidate's effectiveness: Can he get the job done? Can he follow through to make the system work? Has he the stamina, the focus and the determination of a long-distance runner or is he just a show horse? Sure, people want to be inspired, but they are also concerned with results. An increasingly enlightened electorate looks beyond the candidate's slick marketing of leadership slogans. Today Americans are tougher to fool. They understand that by and large, leadership involves judgment, character, firmness, intelligence, competence, and an ability to bargain and negotiate. Political and organizational savvy are at least as important as the "big speech."

We need all the presidential leadership we can get. But it might be well to remember, as John W. Gardner has pointed out, that "a healthy society, especially one with our tradition of dispersed power, should be able to function well with good rather than great leaders." Indeed, how much of our leadership needs must be supplied by a president alone? More attention and renewed respect for other institutions, in and out of government, might strengthen them as alternative sources of problem-solving leadership. We need to deflate the notion—often conveyed in the frenzy of our quadrennial elections—that only a president can provide leadership.

Much of the riddle of the American presidency lies not in the White House but in the feelings and expectations of us all. As long as we continue to hope and dream, as long as there are American dreams, there will be the search for the magical leader. Doubtless, the idea will always flourish in the American mind that it is possible to find a savior-hero who will deliver us to the land of milk and honey. But when these semi-messiahs fail, we inflict upon them the wrath of our vengeance. It is as if there is almost a ritual destruction: we venerate the presidency, but we often savage our presidents.

In the end, we might get more or better leadership if we had a more carefully thought out understanding of what a president can and cannot achieve. And in refining our notions of leadership, we could measurably broaden our conception of where leadership can be found. Of course, we should ask the best from our presidents, but let us not ask more from a single person or a single institution than it is possible for them to deliver.

Thomas Cronin's newest book, *The State of the Presidency* (Little, Brown & Co., 1980) is being published this month.

## SELLING SHORT



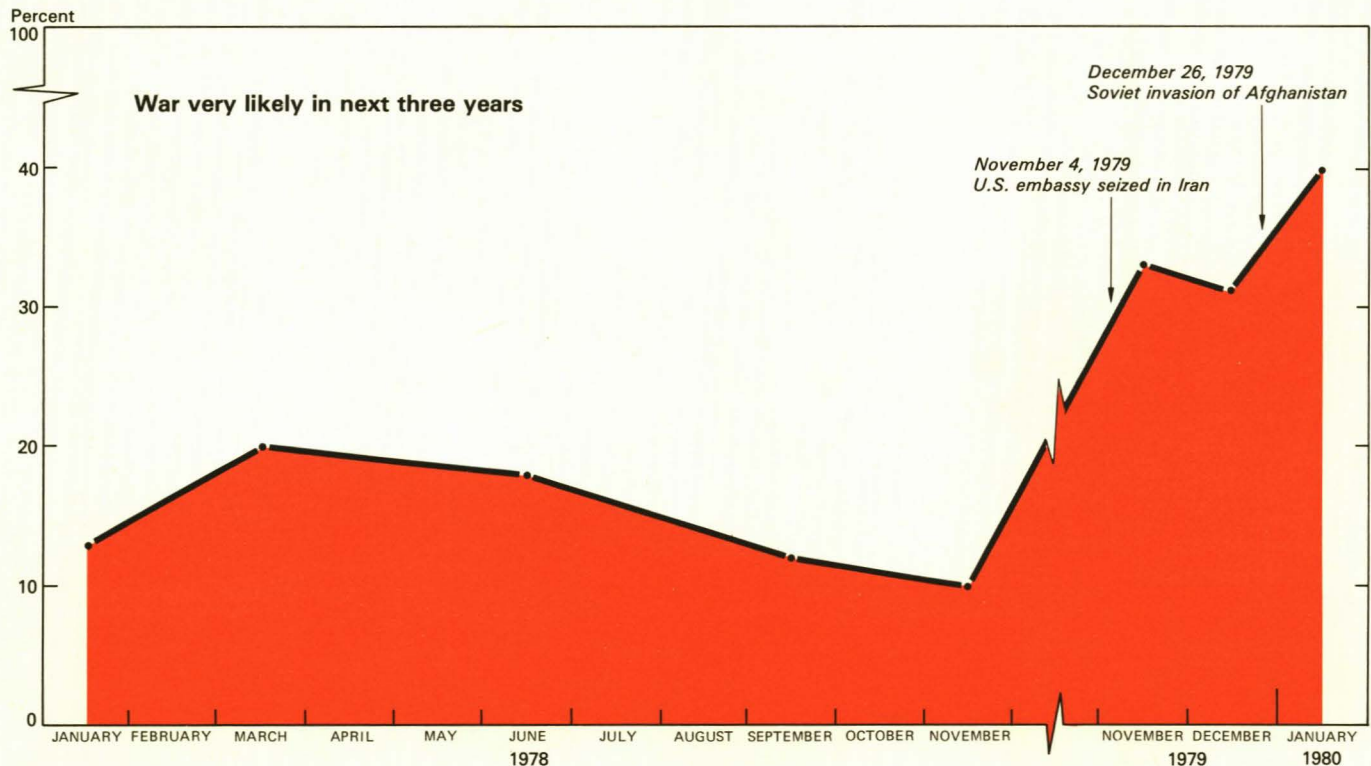
**"We not only lack leadership. We also need someone to tell us what to do."**

© 1979, Universal Press Syndicate. All Rights Reserved.



# THE INTERNATIONAL CAULDRON

**Question:** How likely is it that the United States will become involved in a war during the next three years? Would you say that it is very likely, somewhat likely, or not likely at all?

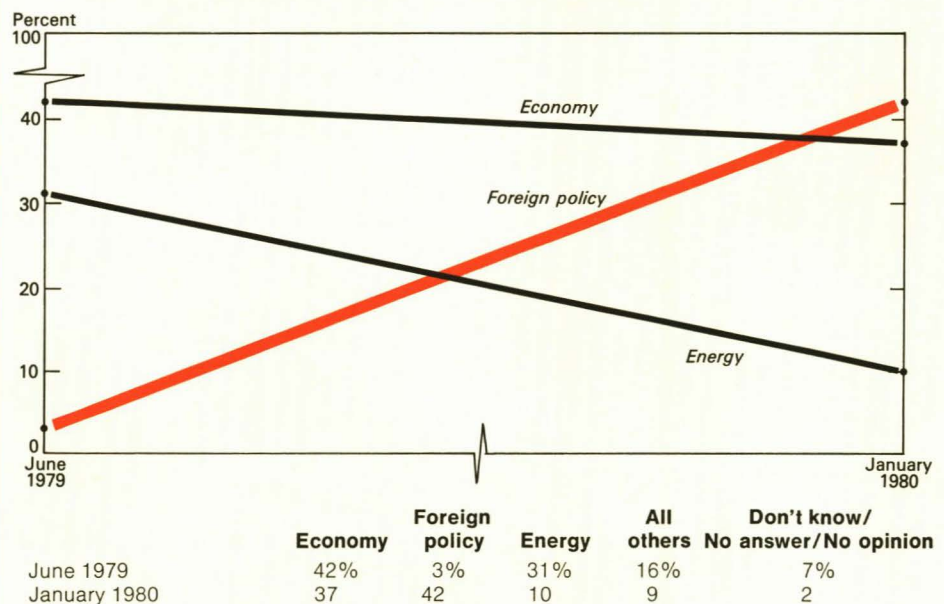


	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not likely at all
1978			
January	13%	31%	56%
March	20	33	47
June	18	35	47
September	12	32	57
November	10	27	63
1979			
November 27-28	33	40	27
December 11-12	31	44	25
1980			
January	40	43	16

**Source:** Surveys by NBC News/Associated Press, latest that of January 17-18, 1980.

## THE EMERGENCE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Question:** What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?



**Note:** *Economy* includes: Economy, Inflation, Prices, Unemployment, Recession. *Foreign Policy* includes: Foreign Policy, Iran, Terrorism, USSR, War and Peace. *Energy* includes: Energy, Oil, Gas. *All Others* includes: Government, Leadership, Carter, Social Problems, Morality, Other Domestic Issues, Taxes, and totals of all others not falling into categories.

**Source:** Surveys by CBS News/New York Times, latest that of January 9-13, 1980.



# Afghanistan: Soviet Style

## WHY RUSSIA DARED

**Question:** Let me read you some of the reasons some people give as to why Russia invaded Afghanistan. For each, tell me if you think that is a major reason for the invasion, a minor reason, or hardly a reason at all?

### Major reasons:

If they conquer Afghanistan, the Russians will be able to have more influence over the oil-producing countries of the Middle East...

78%

The Russians feel they now have military superiority over the United States and could get away with invading Afghanistan...

50%

The Russians made their move on Afghanistan because the United States has become so weak in the world...

34%

The Russians went into Afghanistan because leaders of that country had asked them to come in to put down Moslem revolutionaries...

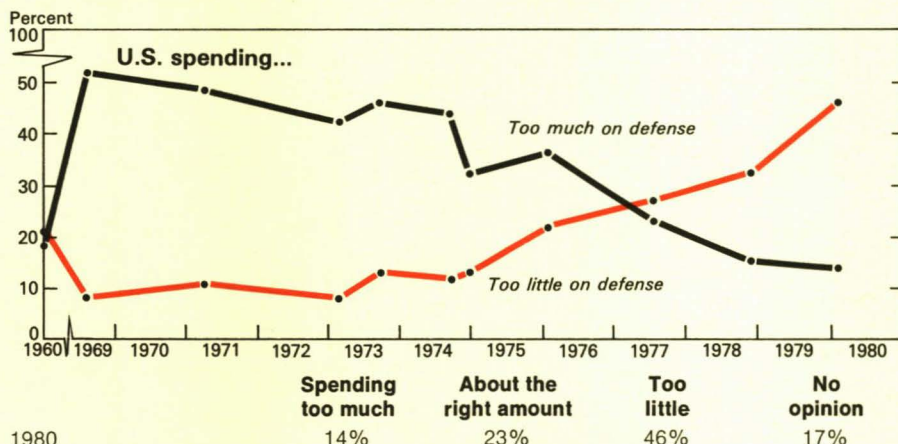
14%

**Note:** Each statement was cited as a minor reason by 12%, 27%, 32%, and 26% respectively. Hardly a reason at all = 6%, 18%, 29%, and 49%.

**Source:** Survey by ABC News/Louis Harris and Associates, January 10-13, 1980.

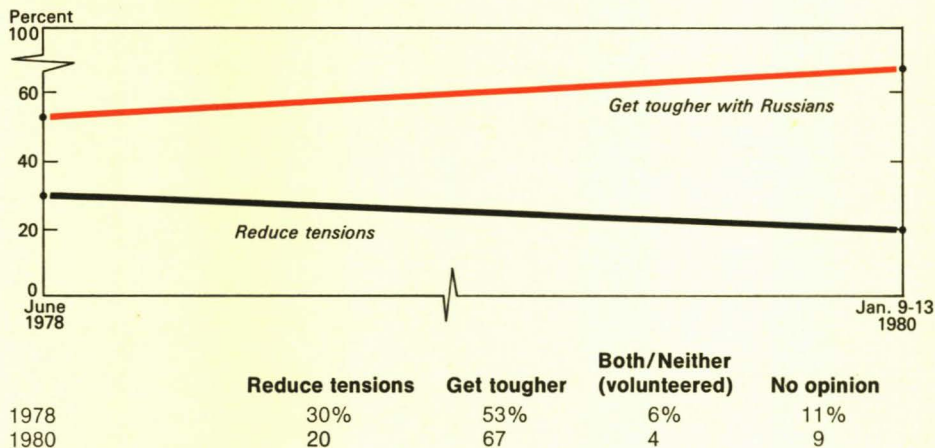
## BARK BACK AT THE BEAR, BUT DON'T BITE

**Question:** There is much discussion as to the amount of money the government in Washington should spend for national defense and military purposes. Do you think we are spending too little, too much, or about the right amount on this? (1980)



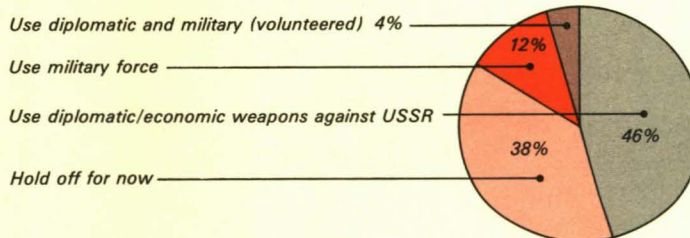
**Note:** For a complete presentation of questions and data shown, see *Public Opinion*, March/May 1979, p. 25.  
**Source:** Survey by CBS News/New York Times, January 9-13, 1980.

**Question:** What do you think the United States should do—should the United States try harder to (relax/reduce) tensions with the Russians or instead should get tougher in its dealings with the Russians?



**Source:** Surveys by CBS News/New York Times, latest that of January 9-13, 1980.

**Question:** As you probably know, a large number of Soviet troops have moved into Afghanistan. What do you think the United States should do with respect to the Soviet actions—use diplomatic and economic weapons against the Soviet Union, use military force in some way, or hold off for the time being?



**Source:** Survey by CBS News/New York Times, January 9-13, 1980.

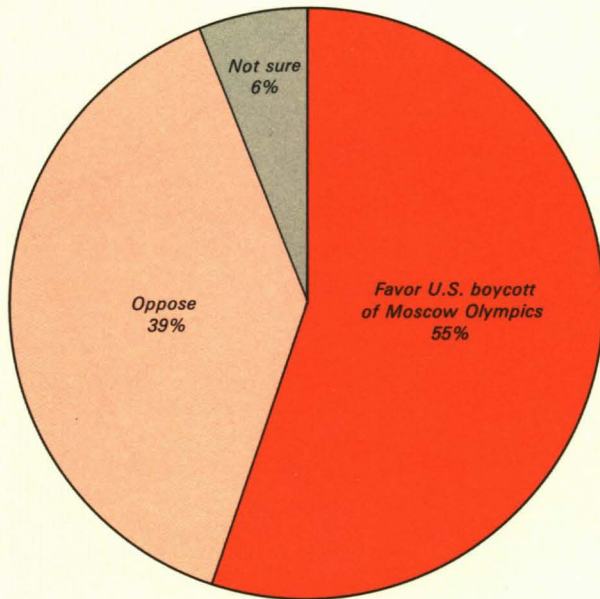


## OPINION ROUNDUP

### OLYMPIC GAMES: NYET

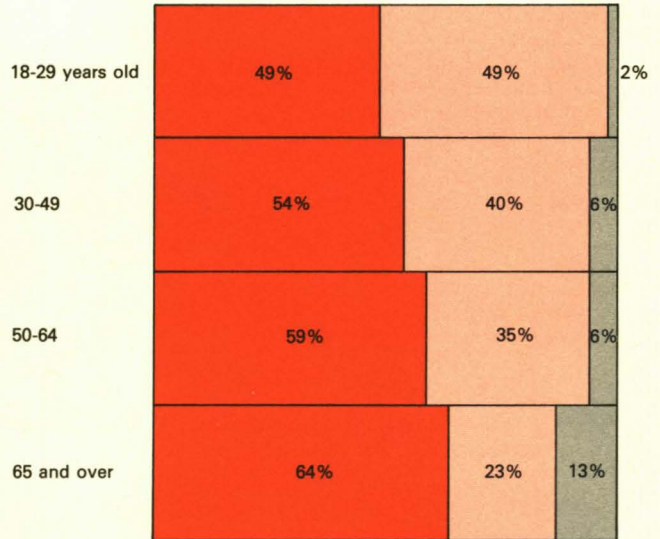
**Question:** President Carter has suggested that if the Russians do not stop their aggression in Afghanistan, the United States should consider not sending its athletes to Moscow for the

Olympic games there this summer. Would you favor or oppose the U.S. *not* sending our Olympic team to Moscow because of their invasion of Afghanistan?



Legend: ■ Favor U.S. boycott of Moscow Olympics ■ Oppose ■ Not sure

By age:



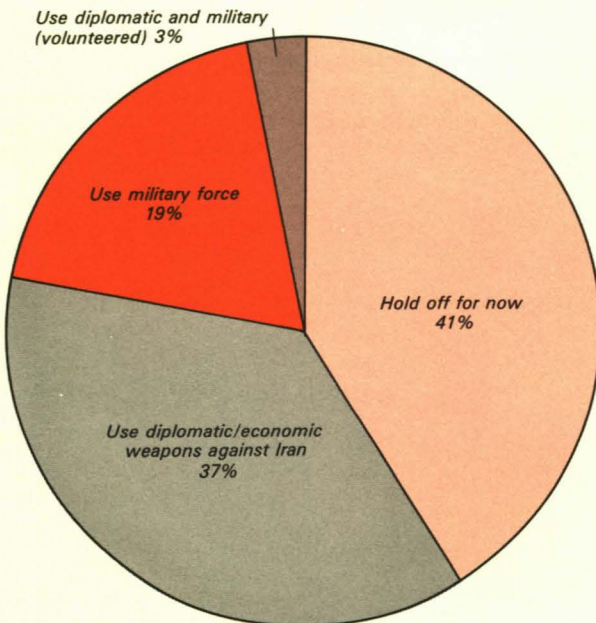
Source: Survey by ABC News/Louis Harris and Associates, January 10-13, 1980.

## Iran: A Hinge Event?

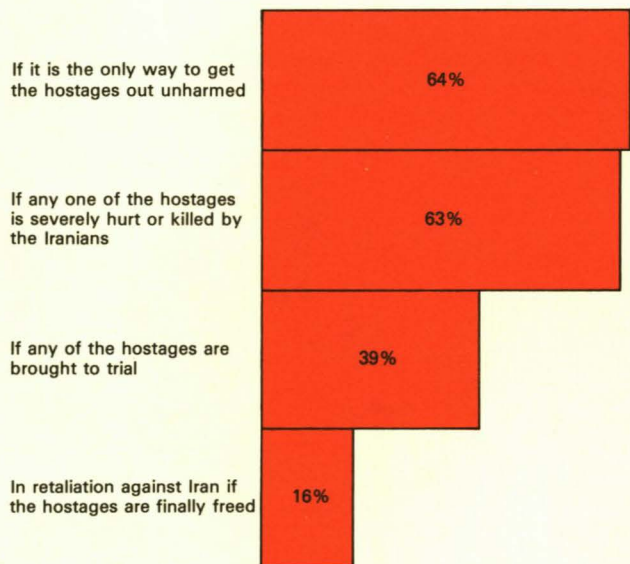
### THE PUBLIC CONSIDERS THE OPTIONS . . .

**Question:** What do you think the United States should do with respect to Iran—use diplomatic and economic weapons, use military force in some way, or hold off for the time being?

**Question:** Would you favor or oppose the use of military force by the United States against Iran? . . .



Favor military force:



Note: "Oppose" responses = 27%, 22%, 43%, 75% respectively.

Source: Survey by Time/Yankelovich, Skelly and White, December 10-12, 1979.

Source: Survey by CBS News/New York Times, January 9-13, 1980.



## OPINION ROUNDUP

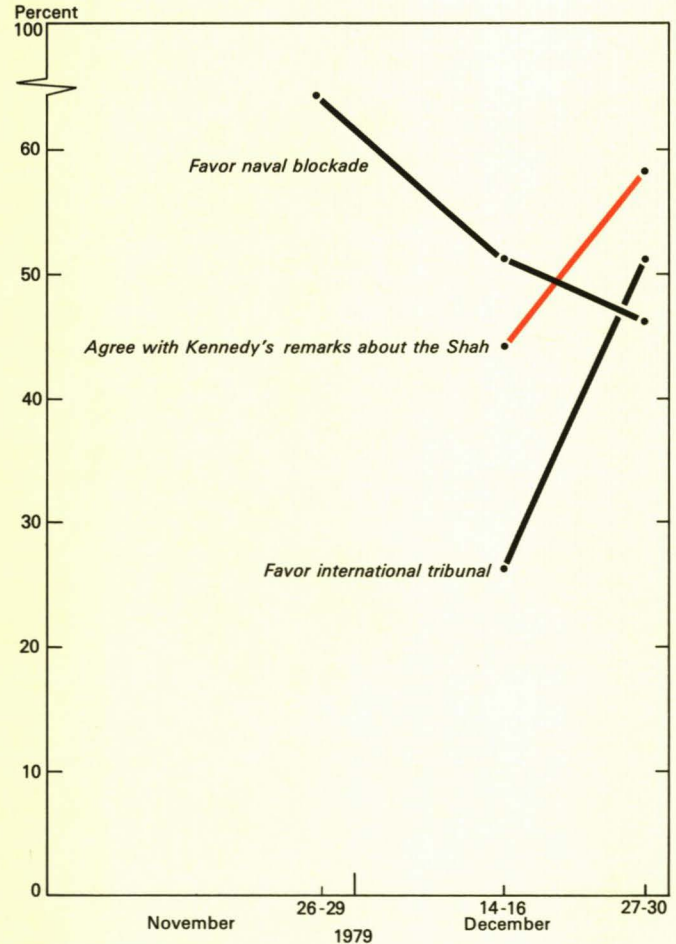
### ... AND RECONSIDERS SOME

**Question:** Do you agree or disagree with Senator Kennedy that the Shah was one of the worst despotic rulers in modern history and was wrong to make off with billions of dollars when he left Iran?

Now let me ask you about some things that have been suggested as possible ways we might get our people being held hostage in Iran out alive. For each, tell me if you would favor or oppose the United States taking that step. . . . Let Iran hold an investigation, with an international tribunal appointed by the ayatollah, of the U.S. role in Iran based on documents seized from our embassy, after which the hostages would be released unharmed; the U.S. Navy putting a naval blockade on all goods being shipped into Iran, even if this might endanger the lives of the hostages.

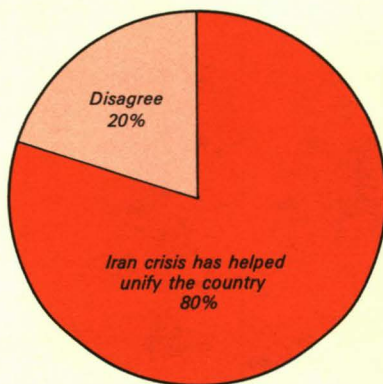
	November	Mid-December	Late December
International tribunal			
Favor		26%	51%
Oppose		66	39
Not sure		8	10
Naval blockade			
Favor	64%	51	46
Oppose	27	41	48
Not sure	9	8	6
Kennedy's comments about Shah			
Agree		44	58
Disagree		40	26
Not sure		16	16

**Source:** Surveys by ABC News/Louis Harris and Associates, latest that of December 27-30, 1979.



### AMERICANS RALLY

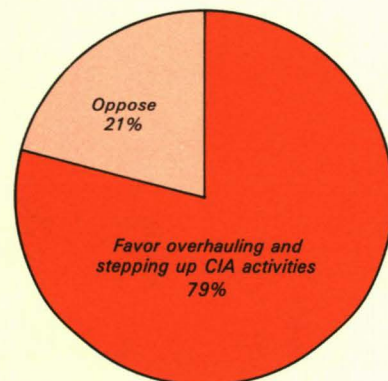
**Question:** Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? . . . The Iranian situation has brought the American people together and helped to unify the country.



**Source:** Survey by Time/Yankelovich, Skelly and White, December 10-12, 1979.

### ... BEHIND THE CIA, TOO

**Question:** As a result of what has happened in Iran, would you favor or oppose the U.S. (Read each item)? . . . Overhauling and stepping up CIA intelligence activities around the world.



**Note:** In a 1974 Harris survey for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 15% felt that the CIA should be given a more important role, 35% felt its role should remain about the same, 28% believed that the CIA should play a less important role, and 23% expressed no opinion.

**Source:** Survey by ABC News/Louis Harris and Associates, November 26-29, 1979.



# Send in the Marines...Sometimes

## NOTE TO READERS

Throughout most of the post-World War II period, the American public has approached questions of the use of military force from a single perspective: it has been cautiously assertive without being bellicose—willing to deploy U.S. armed forces to defend national interests, but insistent that those interests be truly vital.

Thus, in the early 1960s a decisive majority supported the use of American troops in defense of West Berlin but opposed sending our armed forces into Cuba to overthrow Castro's regime. Today Americans would support military retaliation against Iran if the U.S. hostages are harmed while they would reject punitive military action if the hostages are released unharmed or if they are placed on trial.

During most of the postwar period, the public has also granted considerable latitude to the president in determining where vital national interests lie. For example, in April 1970, a clear majority opposed sending American troops into Cambodia; a month later, though, after Nixon had ordered the military operation into Cambodia, a plurality of those responding to a Harris survey endorsed his actions. Throughout the Vietnam War, majorities of Americans were troubled by the immense military commitment but supported Johnson and Nixon when they insisted that vital national interests were at stake.

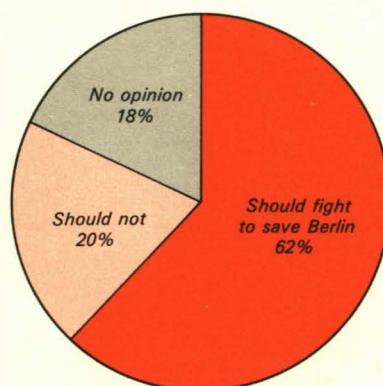
The one instance where the public departed from this stance on military intervention came in the immediate aftermath of the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandals. Thoroughly dissatisfied with the quality of national leadership generally and frustrated by the immense costs of a war which had ended so dubiously, Americans temporarily displayed sharply reduced support for military intervention, even where firm national commitments had been made. For example, even when the Harris organization in 1975 used a leading and argumentative question on employing U.S. troops following American treaty commitments to South Korea, the public showed great reluctance to back any further military involvement.

This immediate post-Vietnam mood had broken completely by the time of last year's embassy seizure in Iran, however; and today Americans are responding much as they did over the years from World War II to Vietnam.

Everett C. Ladd, Jr.  
Consulting Editor  
Opinion Roundup

## 1961 THE BERLIN WALL

**Question:** If Communist East Germany closes all roads to Berlin and does not permit planes to land in Berlin, do you think the United States and its allies should or should not try to fight their way into Berlin?

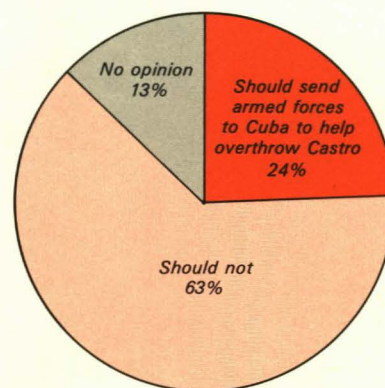


**Note:** Berlin Wall erected by East Germany, halting all crossings between East and West Berlin, August 13, 1961.

**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization, October 19-24, 1961.

## 1962 THE CUBAN CRISIS

**Question:** Some people say that the United States should send our armed forces into Cuba to help overthrow Castro. Do you agree or disagree?

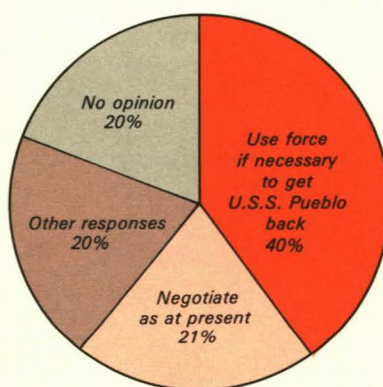


**Note:** Unsuccessful invasion of Cuba at Bay of Pigs, April 17, 1961. United States learned of Soviet missile shipments and military presence in Cuba, August 29, 1962.

**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization, September 20-25, 1962.

## 1968 THE PUEBLO CASE

**Question:** What, in your opinion, should the United States do in regard to this situation? (The present North Korean situation involving the U.S.S. Pueblo.)



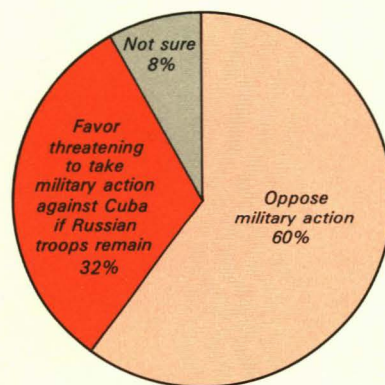
**Note:** U.S.S. Pueblo with 83 crew members seized in Sea of Japan by North Koreans, January 23, 1968.

**Other responses includes:** Too late now—should have taken ship back earlier, 3%; Declare war against North Korea/other extreme "hawkish" comments, 3%; Apologize for spying, 2%; Negotiate to a point, then use force, 6%; and other responses, 5%.

**Source:** Survey by the Gallup Organization, February 1-6, 1968.

## 1979 SOVIET TROOPS IN CUBA

**Question:** As you know, it has been discovered that 2,000 to 3,000 Russian combat troops are now stationed in Cuba. In response to the presence of Russian combat troops in Cuba, do you favor or oppose the United States (read each item)? . . . Threatening to take military action against Cuba if the Russian troops are not taken out of Cuba.



**Note:** State Department announced presence of 2,000-3,000 Soviet combat troops in Cuba, August 31, 1979.

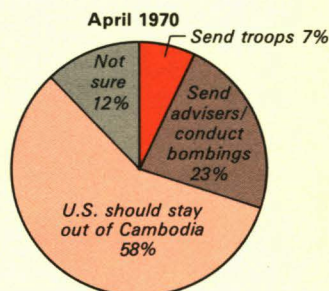
**Source:** Survey by ABC News/Louis Harris and Associates, September 26-October 1, 1979.



## OPINION ROUNDUP

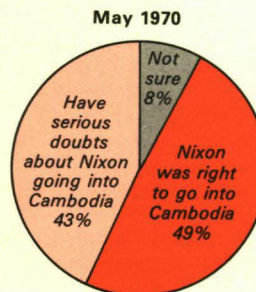
### OPINION ON CAMBODIA AND DEFENSE OF THE PRESIDENT

**Question:** In Cambodia, which is next to South Vietnam, the government was recently overthrown by forces which are less sympathetic to the Communists. Now the Communists have stepped up fighting in Cambodia. The new government has asked for help. Should we send American troops into Cambodia, send in U.S. advisers and conduct bombings, or stay out of Cambodia altogether?



Source: Survey by Louis Harris and Associates, April 1970.

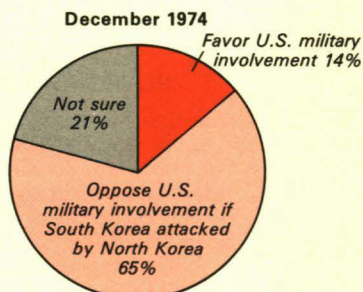
**Question:** Taking everything into consideration, do you think President Nixon was right in ordering the military operation into Cambodia, or do you have serious doubts about his having done this?



Source: Survey by Louis Harris and Associates, May 1970.

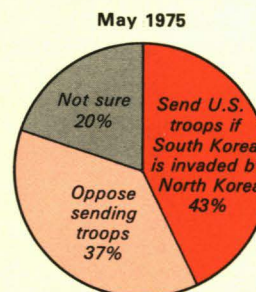
### KOREA: CHANGE THE QUESTION—CHANGE THE ANSWERS

**Question:** There has been a lot of discussion about what circumstances might justify United States military involvement, including the use of United States troops. Do you feel (Read list), you would favor or oppose U.S. military involvement? . . . If North Korea attacked South Korea.



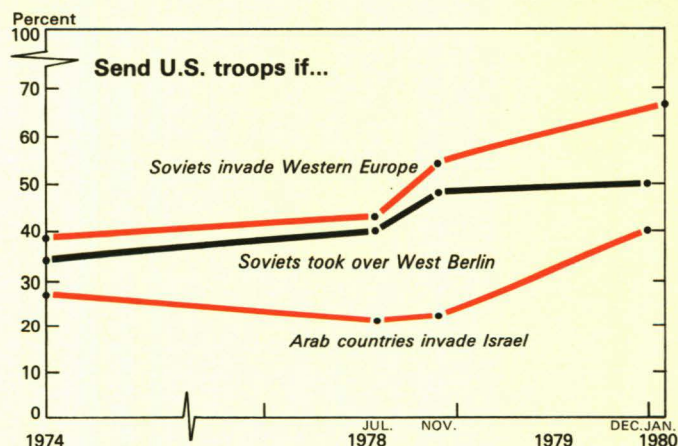
Source: Survey by Louis Harris and Associates for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, December 1974.

**Question:** The U.S. has 36,000 troops and airmen in South Korea. If North Korea invaded South Korea, we have a firm commitment to defend South Korea with our own military forces. If South Korea were invaded by Communist North Korea, would you favor or oppose the U.S. using troops, air power and naval power to defend South Korea?



Source: Survey by Louis Harris and Associates, May 1975.

### BACKING FRIENDSHIP WITH FORCE



**Question:** Would you favor or oppose the use of United States troops in the following situations (Read list)? (1979)

Some people say that there are circumstances that would justify sending U.S. combat troops to other parts of the world. I'd like to know your opinion about several of these situations. . . . Would you favor or oppose U.S. troops fighting the Soviets if the Russians invade Western Europe? (1980)

	1979	1980
Western Europe		67%
West Berlin	50%	
Israel	40	

**Note:** For complete question wording and tabular presentation of earlier material, see *Public Opinion*, March/May 1979, p. 26. 1979 sample size=525. Question wording varies. In some surveys, there was a large "no opinion" category.

**Source:** Surveys by Louis Harris and Associates for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, December 6-14, 1974; Roper Organization (Roper Report 78-7), July 1978; Gallup Organization for the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, November 17-26, 1978; Gallup Organization for *Newsweek*, December 12-13, 1979; NBC News/Associated Press, January 29-30, 1980.



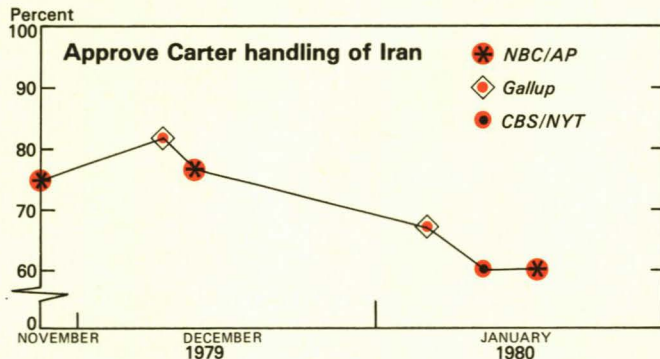
# Does Carter Lose from Foreign News?

## HOW CARTER HANDLES IRAN AND THE SOVIETS

**Question:** Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Carter is handling this situation? (Asked of those who heard or read about the Americans being held hostage in Iran.) (NBC News/Associated Press)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Carter is handling the Iranian situation? (Gallup Organization 1979)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Jimmy Carter is handling the crisis in Iran? (Gallup Organization 1980; CBS News/New York Times)



### NBC/AP

Approve	75%	77%	60%
Disapprove	25	23	40

### Gallup

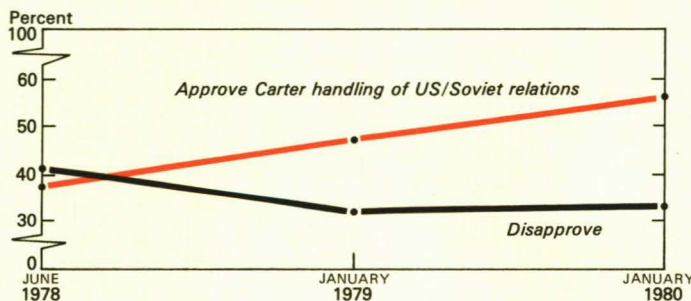
Approve	82%	67%
Disapprove	18	33

### CBS/NYT

Approve	60%
Disapprove	40

**Source:** Surveys by NBC News/Associated Press, latest that of January 17-18, 1980; Gallup Organization, latest that of January 4-6, 1980; CBS News/New York Times, January 9-13, 1980.

**Question:** Do you approve or disapprove of the way Jimmy Carter is handling United States relations with the Soviet Union?



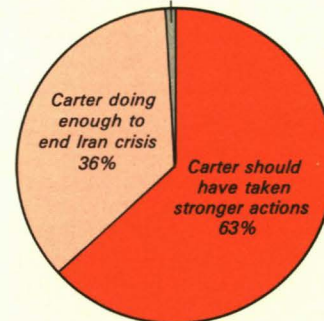
	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion/Not sure
June 1978	37%	41%	22%
January 1979	47	32	21
January 1980	56	33	11

**Source:** Surveys by CBS News/New York Times, latest that of January 9-13, 1980.

## CARTER SEEN TOO SOFT ON IRAN

**Question:** Do you think that Jimmy Carter has been doing enough to end the crisis in Iran, has he been too tough, or do you think he should have taken stronger actions?

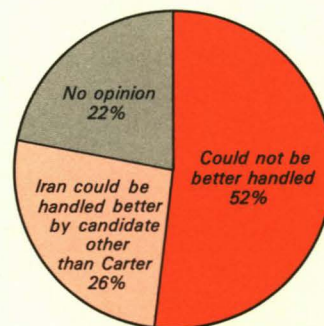
Carter has been too tough 1%



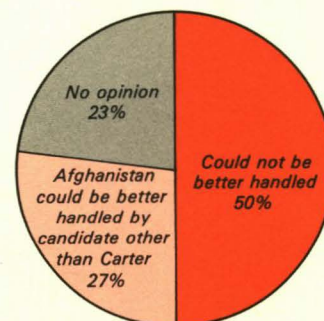
**Source:** Survey by CBS News/New York Times, January 9-13, 1980.

## BUT NO ONE COULD DO BETTER

**Question:** Do you think any of the other candidates now running for President—either Democratic or Republican—could handle the situation in Iran better than Jimmy Carter?



**Question:** Do you think any of the other candidates now running for President—either Democratic or Republican—could handle the situation in Afghanistan better than Jimmy Carter?



**Note:** On Iran, a plurality of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents agree that the situation could not have been handled better by any other candidate. For example, among Republicans, 47% agree, 31% believe that another candidate could do better, and 22% express no opinion. When the same question was asked concerning Afghanistan, 43% of Republicans said the situation could not be handled better, 34% said it could be, and 23% held no opinion.

**Source:** Survey by CBS News/New York Times, January 9-13, 1980.



# Rally 'Round the President: The Public Responds to International Crises

On November 4, when Iranian militants seized the American embassy in Tehran, President Carter's approval rating stood at 32% in the Gallup poll. Before the month of December was out, his rating had soared to 61% and it remained in those lofty climes through the end of January.

While this sudden surge in popularity was massive, it is worth remembering that otherwise it was by no means unique. For years, survey researchers have been intrigued by the tendency of Americans to "rally 'round the president" in times of international crisis. This phenomenon is apparently unrelated to a president's perceived effectiveness in handling a situation, and it also appears to have become more pronounced in the past decade.

The graphs on these two pages illustrate the rally 'round syndrome. Before Truman ordered the Berlin airlift in June of 1948, for example, he stood at 39% in the Gallup poll. By January 1949, when Gallup next posed the question, Truman's approval had zoomed to 69%. A successful election campaign intervened, of course, and that undoubtedly accounted for a major part of the boost. With Truman, as with other presidents, many items can affect popularity. At the outbreak of the Korean War, Tru-

man stood at 37%, and this time his approval jumped nine points within a month.

For Eisenhower, the dispatch of marines to Lebanon was accompanied by one of the sharpest rises of his tenure—a quick six point jump. President Kennedy showed that even a disastrous military operation (the Bay of Pigs) could give a president a five point boost; later on, the Cuban missile crisis apparently contributed to a fifteen point rise in his ratings from 61% to 76% over a three month period. The Mayaguez incident in 1975 produced a similar blip for President Ford, taking him from 39% in April of 1975 to 52% in late June.

How the current crises are resolved and whether they will have lasting effects on President Carter's approval rating remains to be seen, but the initial response has provided Carter—as it has other presidents—a much needed rallying point.

Karlyn H. Keene  
Deputy Managing Editor  
Public Opinion Magazine

## NOTE ON OPINION ROUNDUP

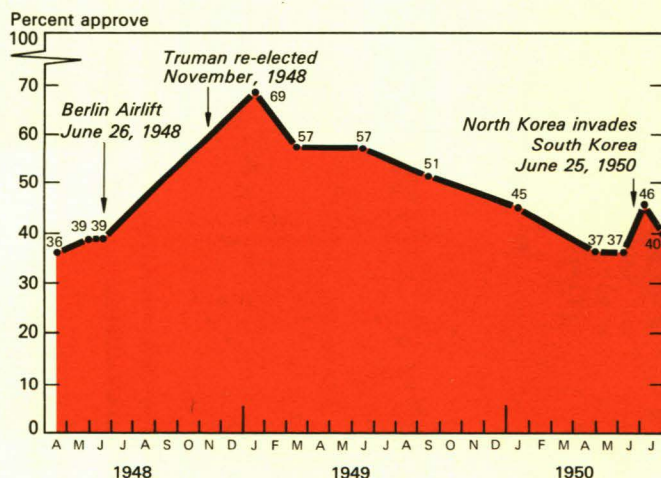
Most of the responses shown in these surveys were gathered either by personal interviews (Harris and Gallup polls) or by telephone (CBS/ New York Times and the NBC/Associated Press polls). Unless otherwise noted, the samples usually consist of approximately 1,500 voting age men and women, chosen to constitute a representative sample of the entire U.S. population. In the typical sample of 1,500 respondents, there is a 95 percent chance or better that the margin of error will not exceed  $\pm 3$  percent variation from the distribution which would appear if the nation's entire population were questioned. The possibilities for error are larger when numbers are displayed for sub-

categories of each sample.

The reader may note that in some cases a "no opinion" column is shown while in others it is not. This reflects a common practice in the publication of polls: when the "no opinion" or "undecided" responses are relatively small, on the order of 10 percent or less, one reports only the answers of those who have a definite opinion. However, when "no opinion" answers are a high proportion of the sample, they are reported because they reveal a substantial degree of unawareness or uncertainty within the populace on the issues in question.

## FOR TRUMAN, BERLIN AND KOREA

**Question:** Do you approve or disapprove of the way Truman is handling his job as President?

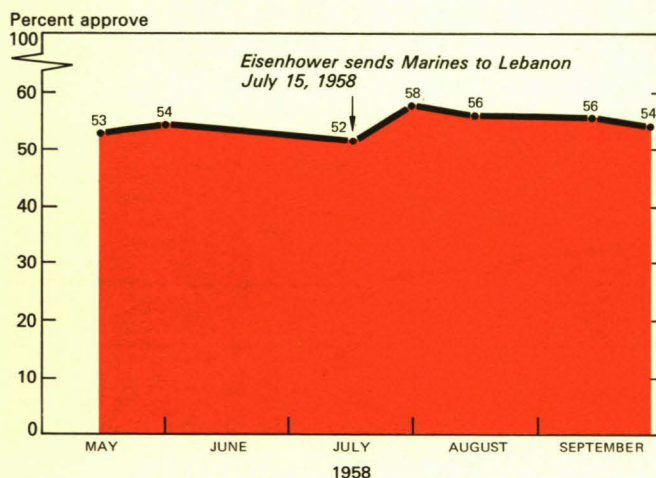


**Note:** Interview dates in June 1948 were June 19-24, 39%. In 1950, June 4-9, 37%; July 9-14, 46%.

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of August 1950.

## FOR EISENHOWER, THE MARINES IN LEBANON

**Question:** Do you approve or disapprove of the way Eisenhower is handling his job as President?



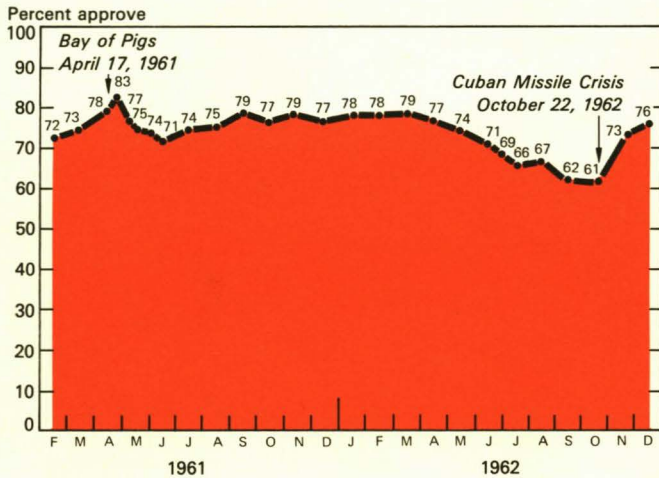
**Note:** Interview dates in July 1958 were July 10-15, 52%; July 30-August 4, 58%.

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of September 1958.



## OPINION ROUNDUP

### FOR JFK, THE BAY OF PIGS AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS



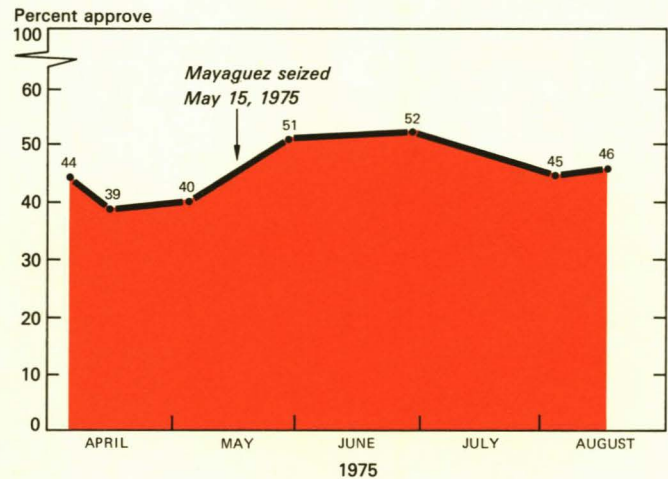
**Question:** Do you approve or disapprove of the way Kennedy is handling his job as President?

**Note:** Interview dates in April 1961 were April 6-11, 78%; April 4-May 3, 83%. Interview dates in October 1962 were October 19-24, 61%; November 16-21, 73%.

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of December 1962.

### AND FORD, THE MAYAGUEZ

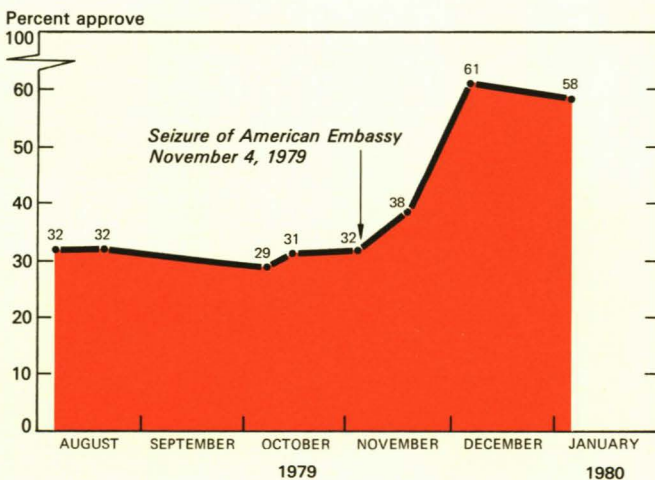
**Question:** Do you approve or disapprove of the way Ford is handling his job as President?



**Note:** Interview dates in May 1975 were May 2-5, 40%; May 30-June 2, 51%.

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of August 1975.

### FOR CARTER, THE HOSTAGES IN IRAN



**Question:** Do you approve or disapprove of the way Carter is handling his job as President?

**Note:** Interview dates in November 1979 were November 2-5, 32%; November 16-19, 38%; December 1-5, 61%.

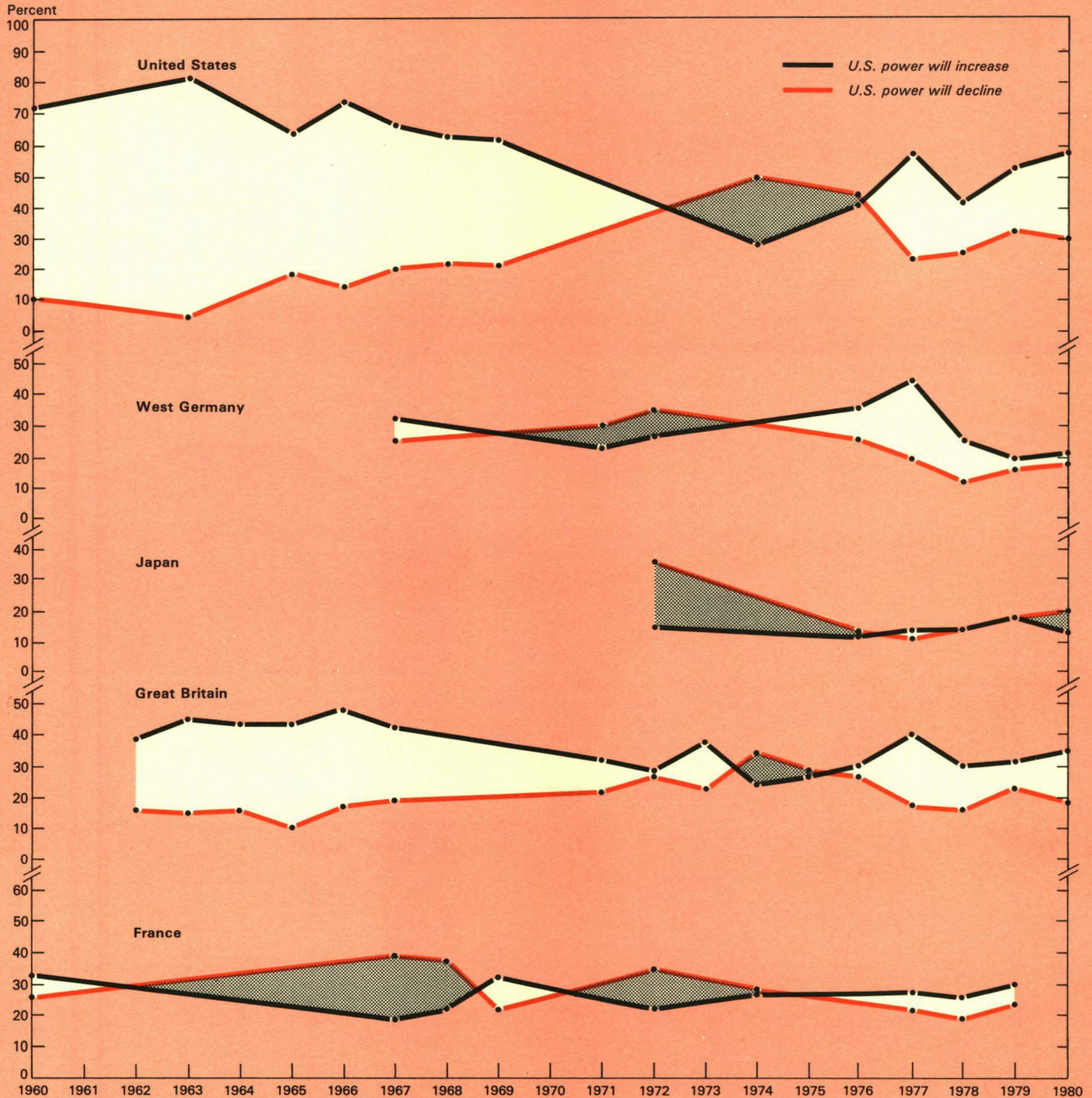
**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of January 1980.



# Soviets on

**Question:** Which of these do you think is likely to be true of (named year): A year when (America/Russia) will increase her power in the w

International Power Predictions for the United States



**Note:** Question wording varied slightly over the years. The "same/don't know" response includes the responses same, don't know, no change, no answer, no

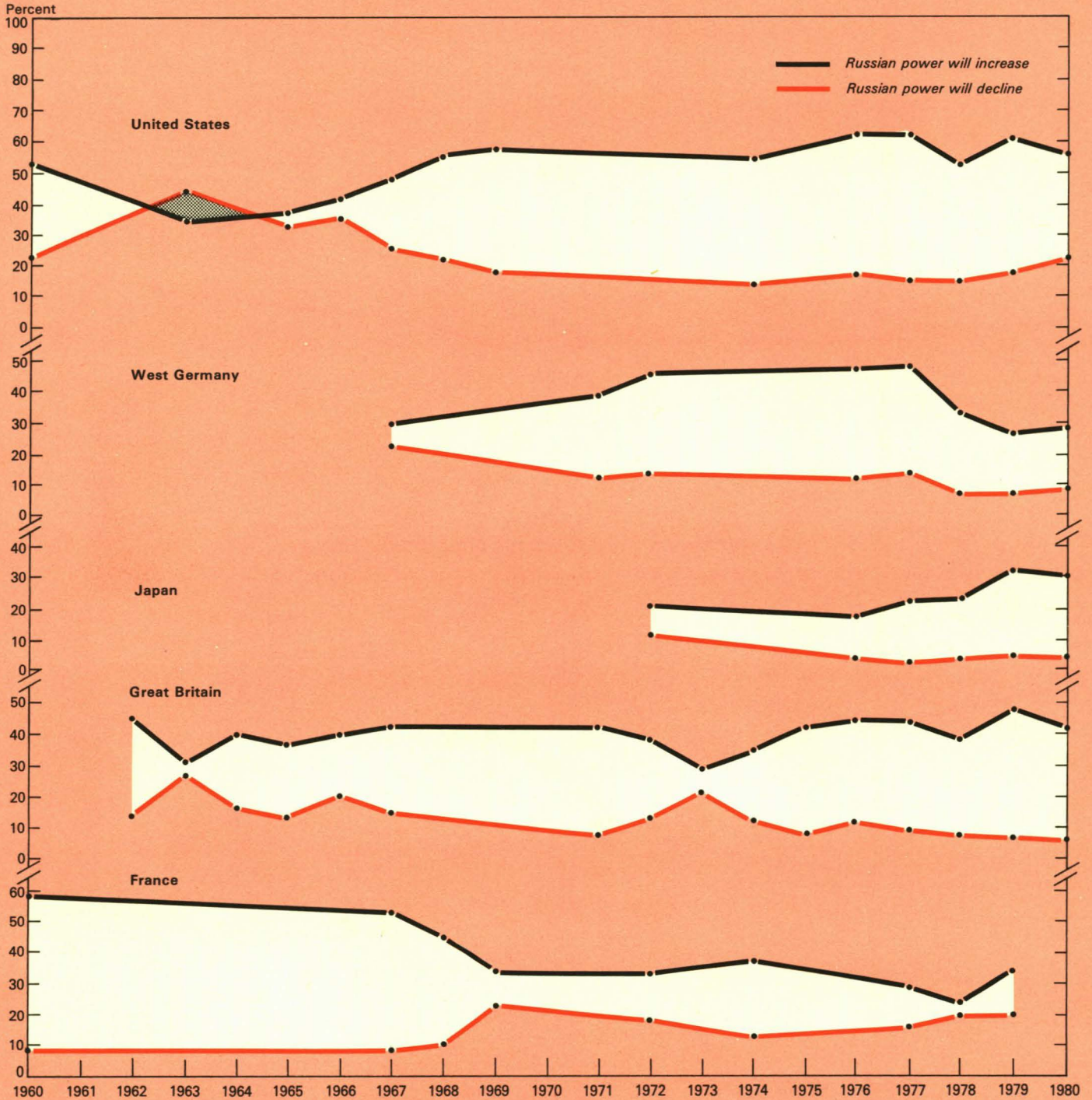
opinion, as the response varied over the years. The "decline" response read "decrease" in some years.



# the March?

World or a year when (American/Russian) power will decline?

International Power Predictions for Russia



Source: Surveys by the Gallup International Research Institutes, latest that of November-December 1979.

The data for this presentation are shown on page 33.



# The Dawn of the Ecchh Decade

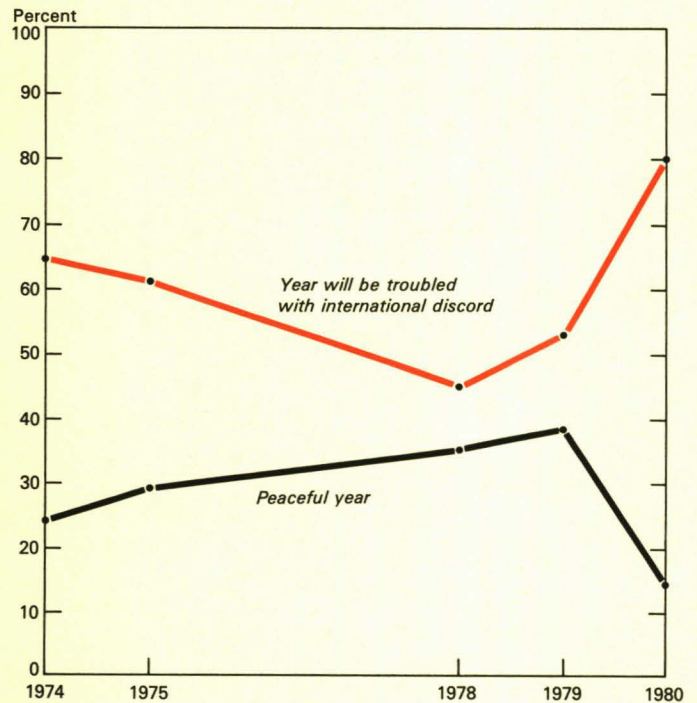
## A TIME OF INTERNATIONAL TROUBLES FORESEEN

**Question:** Which of these do you think is likely to be true of (named year), a peaceful year, more or less free of international disputes, or a troubled year with much international discord?

**Prediction for:**

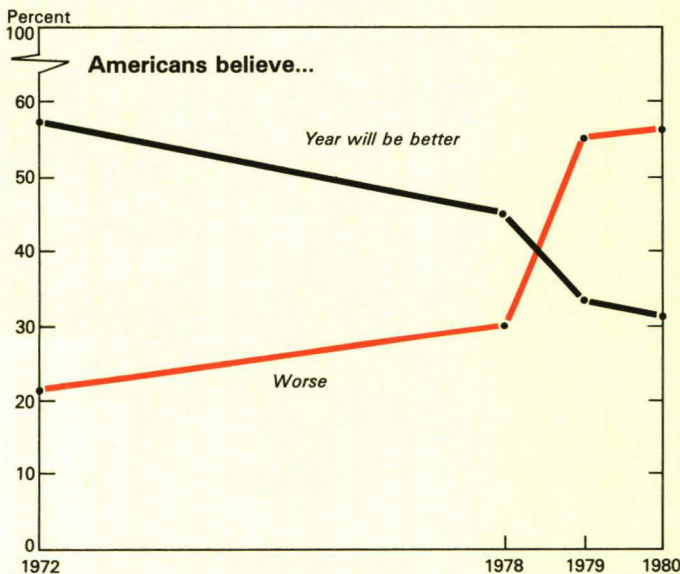
	Troubled	Peaceful	Same/Don't know
1974	65%	24%	11%
1975	61	29	10
1978	45	35	20
1979	53	38	9
1980	80	14	6

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of November 30-December 3, 1979.



## FOR BETTER OR WORSE: 1980 GLOBAL PREDICTIONS

**Question:** As far as you're concerned, do you expect next year (named year) will be better or worse than (named previous year)?

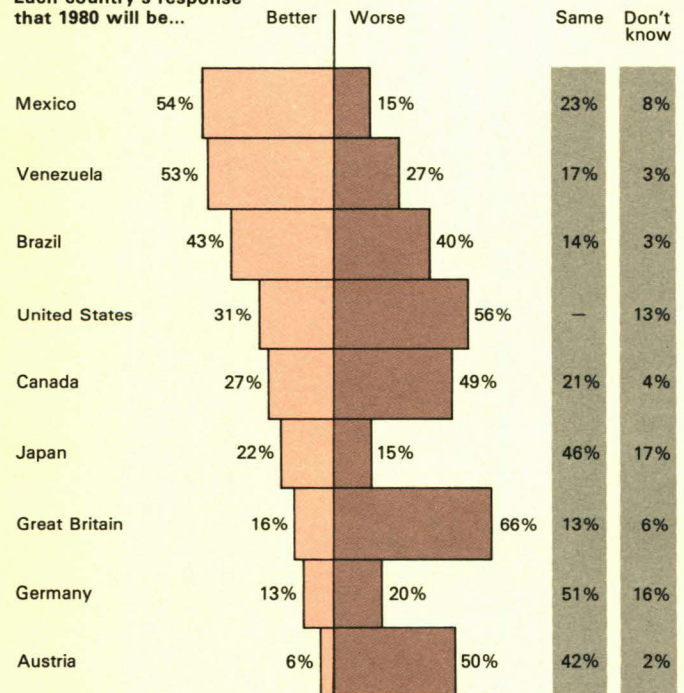


**Prediction for:**

	Better	Worse	Same	Don't know
1972	57%	22%	14%	6%
1978	45	30	18	7
1979	33	55	—	12
1980	31	56	—	13

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup International Research Institutes, latest that of November-December 1979.

**Each country's response that 1980 will be...**



**Note:** In 1979 and 1980 predictions, responses for the United States did not include a "Same" category.



## OPINION ROUNDUP

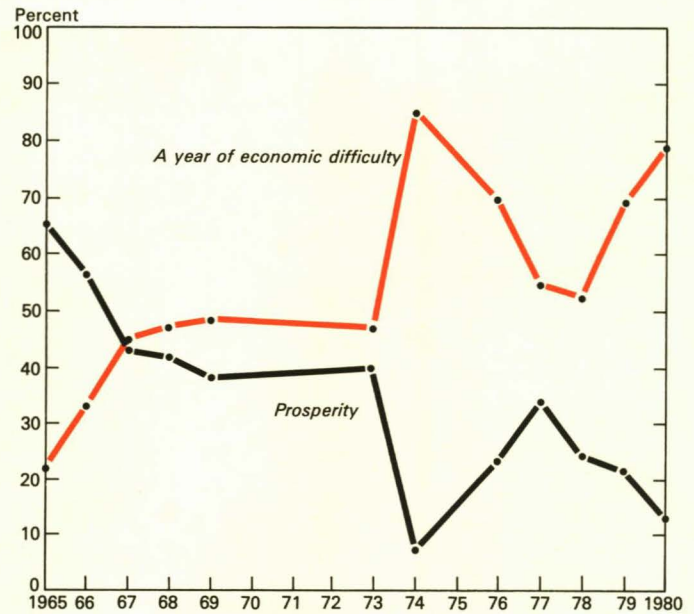
### ECONOMIC PROSPECTS GRIM

**Question:** Which of these do you think is likely to be true of (named year): a year of economic prosperity or a year of economic difficulty?

Prediction for:	Difficulty	Prosperity	Don't know
1965	22%	65%	13%
1966	33	56	11
1967	45	43	12
1968	47	42	11
1969	48	38	14
1973	47	40	13
1974	85	7	8
1976	70	23	7
1977	54	34	12
1978	52	24	24
1979	69	21	10
1980	79	13	8

**Note:** In 1980, "Don't know" includes "same" and "don't know."

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of November 30-December 3, 1979.



#### "Soviets on the March" data, pp. 30 and 31

##### Power Predictions for America

	1960	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	1970	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	1980
United States																					
Increase		72		82		64	74	66	63	62					29		42	58	42	53	58
Decline		10		5		19	14	20	22	21					50		44	24	26	33	30
Same/Don't know		18		13		17	12	14	15	17					21		14	18	32	15	12
West Germany																					
Increase									32			24	26				35	44	26	20	21
Decline									25			30	35				26	20	12	16	18
Same/Don't know									43			46	38				39	36	62	64	61
Japan														15			12	14	14	18	13
Increase														15			12	14	14	18	13
Decline														35			13	11	14	18	20
Same/Don't know														50			75	75	72	64	67
Great Britain																					
Increase				39	45	43	43	47	42			32	29	38	24	27	30	40	30	34	35
Decline				16	15	16	10	17	19			22	28	23	34	29	27	17	16	23	19
Same/Don't know				40			47	36	39			46	43	39	42	44	43	43	54	46	45
France																					
Increase		33							19	21	32				21			28	27	30	
Decline		26							39	37	22				35			21	19	23	
Same/Don't know		41							42	42	46				44			51	54	47	

##### Power Predictions for Russia

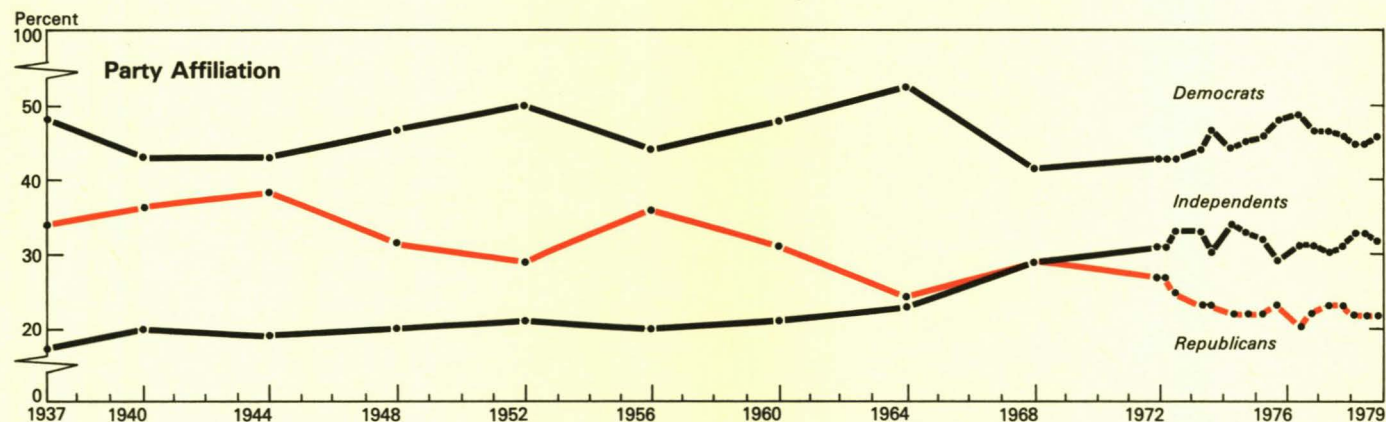
	1960	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	1970	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	1980
United States																					
Increase		53		35		38	42	49	56	58					55		63	63	53	61	56
Decline		23		45		33	36	26	22	19					14		18	16	16	19	22
Same/Don't know		24		20		29	22	25	22	23					31		19	21	31	20	22
West Germany																					
Increase									30			39	46				47	49	33	27	28
Decline									23			12	13				12	14	8	8	9
Same/Don't know									47			48	41				41	37	59	65	63
Japan																					
Increase														21			18	22	24	32	30
Decline														11			4	3	4	5	4
Same/Don't know														68			78	75	72	63	66
Great Britain																					
Increase				45	31	40	37	40	42			42	39	29	35	43	44	44	39	48	41
Decline				14	27	17	13	20	15			9	13	21	13	9	12	10	9	8	6
Same/Don't know				42			50	40	43			49	48	50	52	48	44	46	52	44	54
France																					
Increase		59							53	45	34				33			29	23	34	
Decline		9							9	10	23				19			17	20	20	
Same/Don't know		32							38	45	43				48			54	57	46	



# 1980: Portrait of the Parties

## The Party Lineup

**Question:** In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?



	Oct-Dec 1977	Apr-June 1978	Oct-Dec 1978	Jan-Mar 1979	Apr-June 1979	Oct-Dec 1979
Democrats	47%	47%	46%	45%	45%	46%
Republicans	22	23	23	22	22	22
Independents	31	30	31	33	33	32

**Note:** "Other" and "Don't know/No opinion" excluded. The October-December 1979 data is based on the results of five surveys combined with a combined sample of 7,680 respondents.

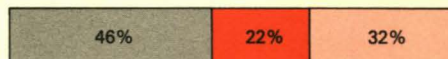
For a complete presentation of data shown, see *Public Opinion*, March/April 1978, p. 23.

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of October-December 1979. (October 12-15, 1979; November 2-5, 1979; November 16-19, 1979; November 30-December 3, 1979; December 7-10, 1979.)

**Question:** In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?

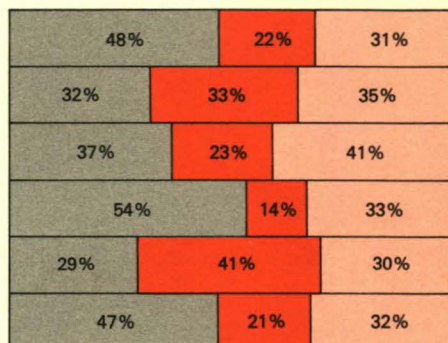
Democrats
  Republicans
  Independents

### National



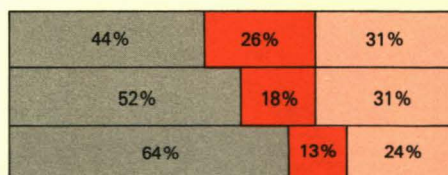
### By specific groups:

Southern white Protestant  
 Non-Southern white Protestant  
 Non-Southern white Protestant manual  
 Non-Southern white Catholic manual  
 Non-Southern white Protestant professional and business  
 Non-Southern white Catholic professional and business



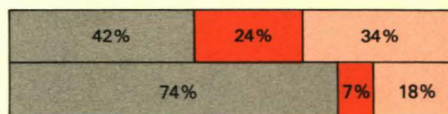
### By religion:

Protestant  
 Catholic  
 Jewish



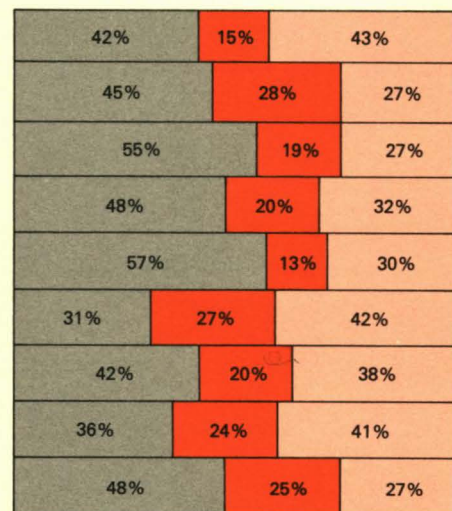
### By race:

White  
 Non-white



### By region:

New England  
 Middle Atlantic  
 South Atlantic  
 East South Central  
 West South Central  
 Mountain  
 East North Central  
 West North Central  
 Pacific



**Note:** Data shown are based on the results of five surveys combined with a combined sample of 7,680 respondents. *Professional and Business* includes: Professional and Business, Executive. *Manual* includes: Skilled workers, Unskilled workers, Operatives, Service workers, and Laborers except Farm and Mine.

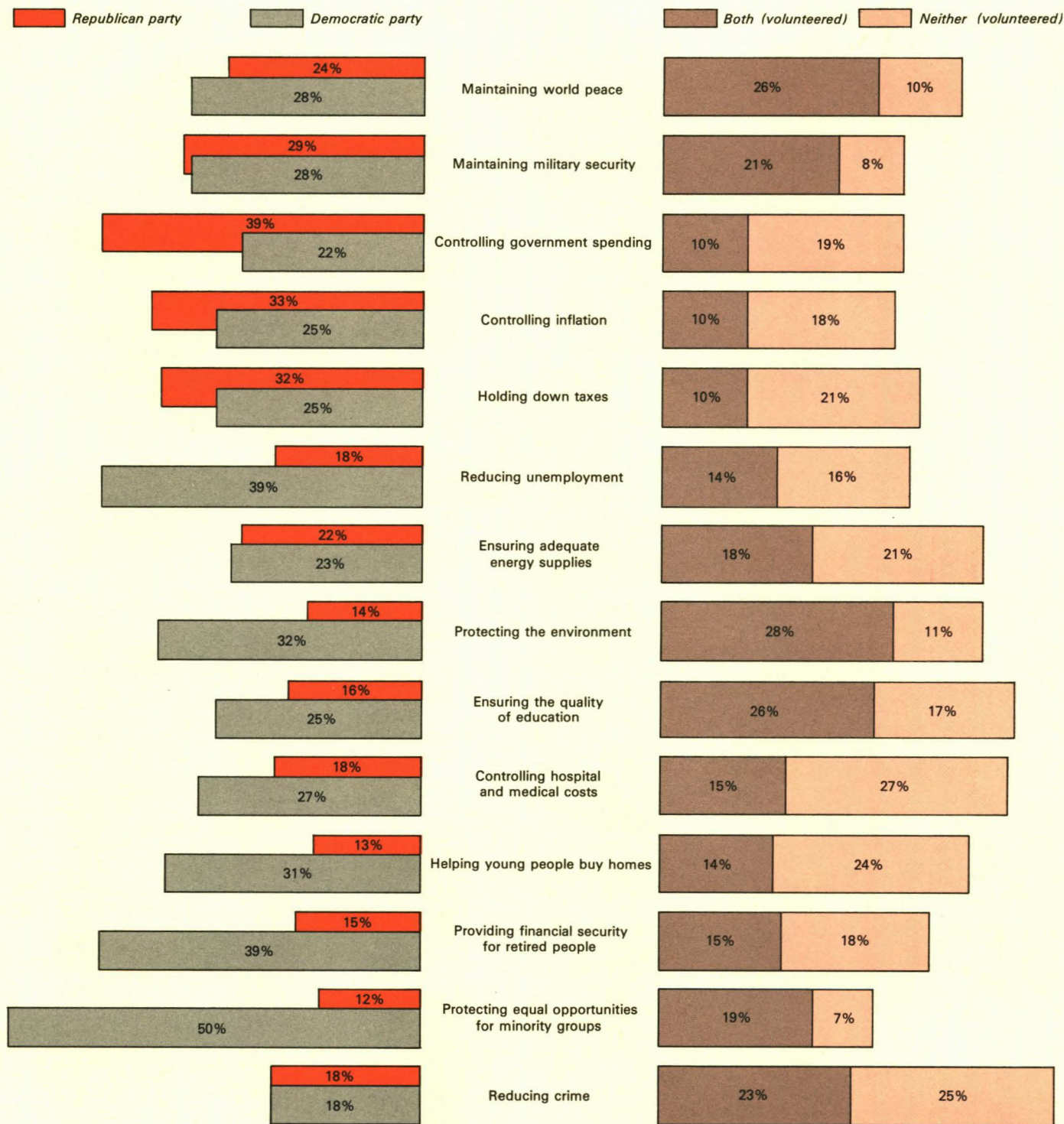
*New England* = Me., Vt., N.H., Mass., Conn., R.I.; *Middle Atlantic* = N.Y., N.J., Penn.; *South Atlantic* = Del., Md., W. Va., Va., N.C., S.C., Ga., Fla., D.C.; *East South Central* = Ky., Tenn., Ala., Miss.; *West South Central* = Ark., Okla., La., Texas; *Mountain* = Mont., Idaho, Wyo., Nev., Utah, Col., Ariz., N. Mex.; *East North Central* = Wisc., Ill., Ind., Mich., Ohio; *West North Central* = Minn., Iowa, Mo., N. Dak., S. Dak., Neb., Kans.; *Pacific* = Wash., Ore., Calif., Alaska, Hawaii.

**Source:** Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of October-December 1979. (October 12-15, 1979; November 2-5, 1979; November 16-19, 1979; November 30-December 3, 1979; December 7-10, 1979.)



# The Parties as Problem Solvers

**Question:** I'm going to read to you the list of problems and issues facing the country, and as I read each one, I would like you to tell me whether you think the Republican party or the Democratic party would do the better job of handling that particular problem or issue.



**Note:** "Don't know/No answer" not shown. Ranges from 10%-18%.

**Source:** Survey by Market Opinion Research for the Republican National Committee and the National Republican Congressional Committee, October 21-November 15, 1979.

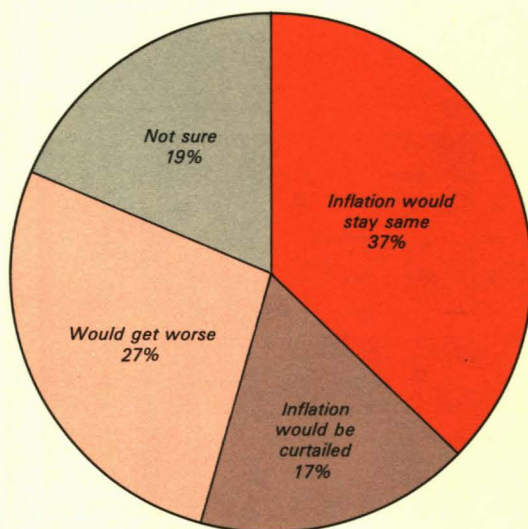


# Republican/Democrat: Often Synonymous

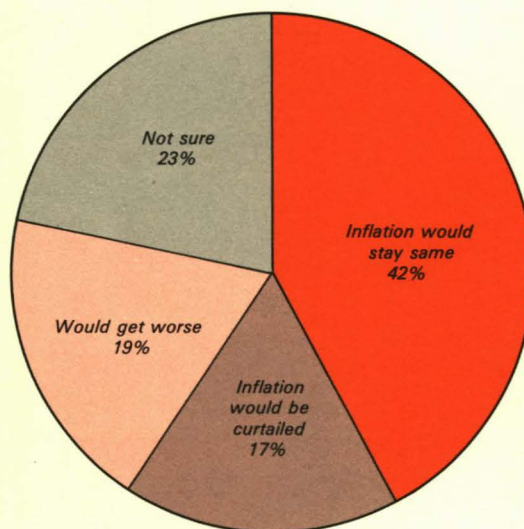
**Question:** Do you feel that under a Republican administration, inflation would be curtailed, stay the same, or get worse?  
Forgetting President Carter, do you feel that under a *different*

Democratic administration, inflation would be curtailed, stay the same, or get worse?

Under Republican Administration



Under Different Democratic Administration



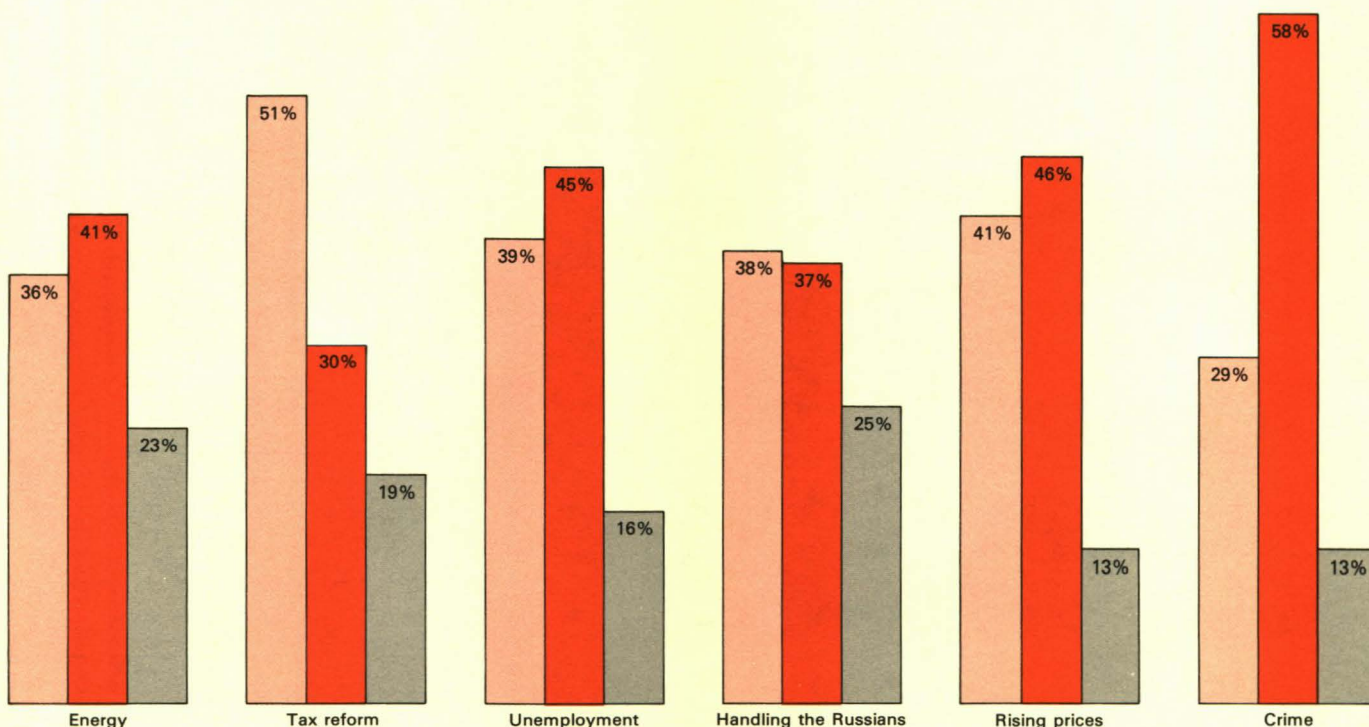
Source: Survey by Time/Yankelovich, Skelly and White, April 1979.

**Question:** Do you think Republicans and Democrats in your area have different positions on . . . (read each) . . . or don't they differ?

Parties differ

Don't differ

No opinion



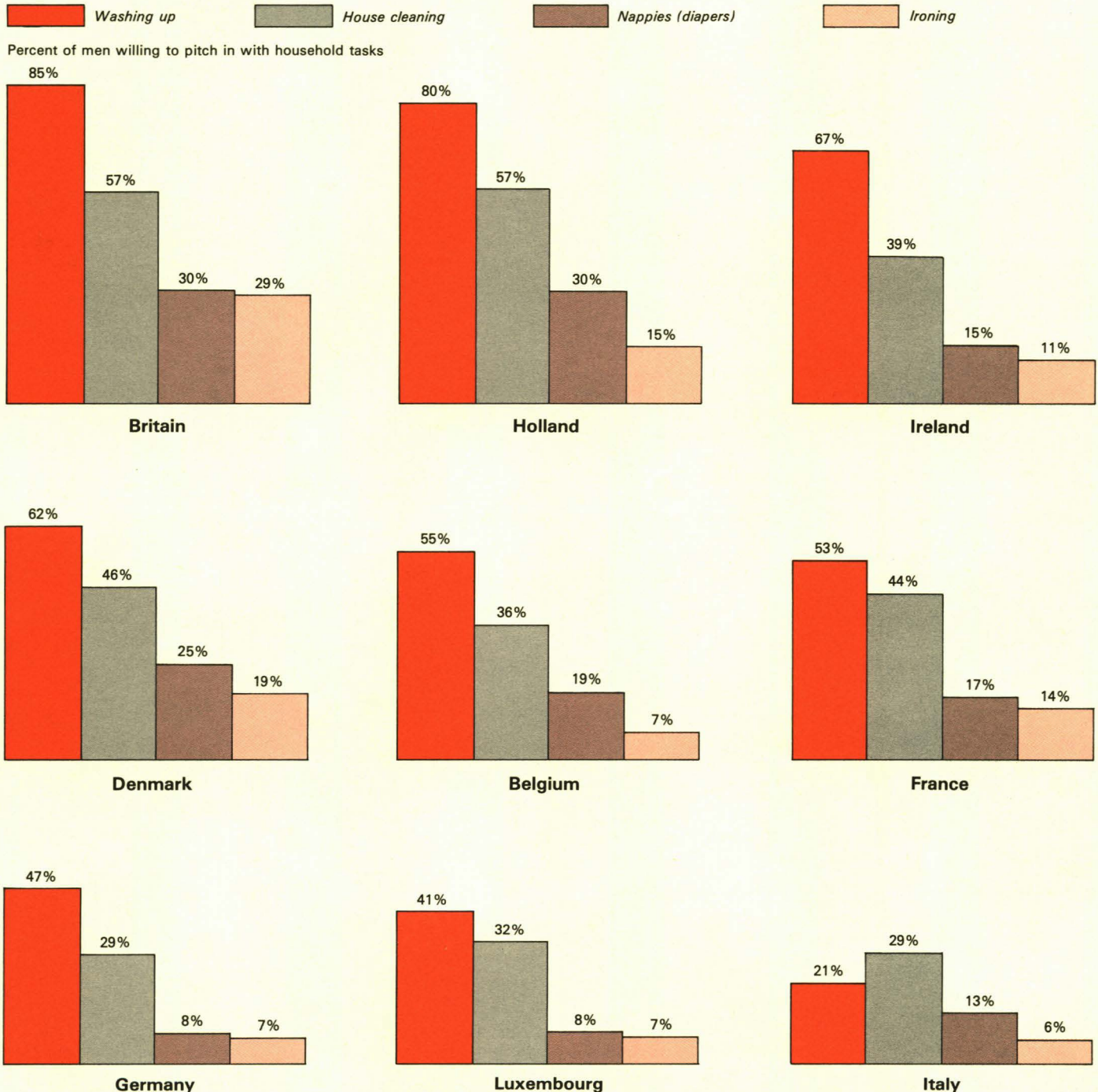
Source: Survey by CBS News/New York Times, June 19-23, 1978.



# “Women’s Work” is Rarely Done by Men in Italy, Germany...

**Question:** In the following list, which household jobs would you say it would be reasonable that the man would often take over from his wife; washing up (doing dishes), changing baby’s nap-

kin (diaper), cleaning house, ironing, organizing meal, staying at home with sick child, shopping, none of these?



**Note:** In every country except Luxembourg, the sample size for each country exceeded 900. For Luxembourg, the sample was 334.

**Source:** Survey by the European Economic Community Commission, “Women and Men of Europe in 1978,” October-November 1977.



# Gaping at the Generation Gap

Where you stand, it is sometimes said, depends on where you sit. As shown by the charts on these pages, public opinion polls tend to bear out that old adage, for they illustrate that people's views are heavily influenced by age, educational background, and experiences while they are growing up.

These graphs depict the views of five different "cohorts" or generations in society:

- The pre-war generation (made up of those who were 20 years old before or during 1945);
- The 40's generation (those who were 20 years of age from 1946-1953);
- The 50's generation (those who were 20 years old from 1954-1963, during the Kennedy and Eisenhower presidencies);
- The 60's generation (those who were 20 years old from 1964-1972, during the Vietnam era);
- The 70's generation (those who were 20 years old from 1973-1978).

The views of each of these groups were measured by a series of surveys taken during the 1970s by the National Opinion Research Center in Chicago; where the question was asked more than once during the 1970s, the data were combined for each age group. As will be noted, each age group was also subdivided into those who had gone to college for at least one year and those who had not. The graphs are shown as timelines for display purposes.

There are three stories here. First, there is a general tendency for members of younger generations to take more "liberal" positions. The effect is greater for some issues than others—

relatively large on the question of premarital sex, relatively small on busing. Nonetheless, it appears that in general, the later the cohort, the more liberal its views. This does not mean that individuals are changing their views but does show a liberalizing of the citizenry.

Second, except for the "New Deal" issue and busing, those who went to college tend to be more liberal than members of the corresponding non-college people of the same general age. This pattern is especially evident on issues such as spending on the environment and legalized abortion.

What may be more interesting, however, is the third story contained in these graphs—the unmistakable presence of a liberal "blip" for the 60's generation who went to college. On issue after issue, that cohort seems particularly liberal relative to other college-educated generations. Moreover, the "blip" seems to be missing for the 60's generation who did not go to college. With the exception of the most purely moral, non-political issue presented (the morality of pre-marital sex), the 60's non-college group fits into the pattern of other non-college cohorts much more than does the 60's college group.

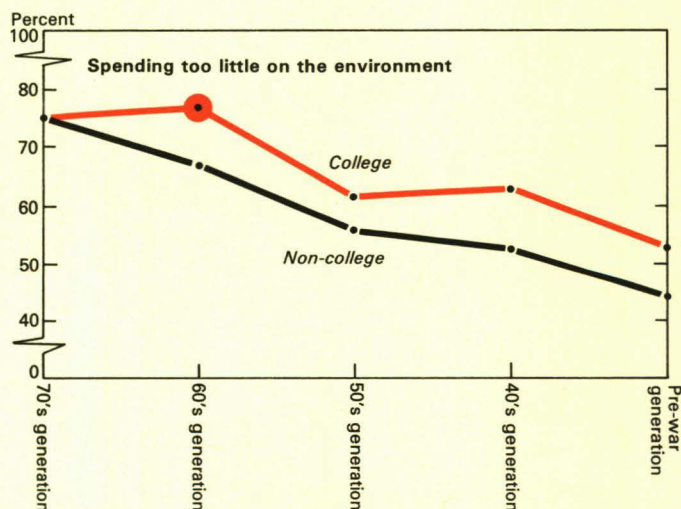
It is often asked whether the Vietnam era had a lasting effect upon college students of that period. In other words, if we knew nothing of the history of the period, could we find traces of its effects in the "archeological record" of attitudes held later? These surveys from the 1970s suggest that something did indeed happen to college students of the 60's that left real, if not overwhelming, traces a decade later.

G. Donald Ferree, Jr.

Assistant Director for Surveys and Methods  
The Roper Center

Source: Surveys by National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, latest that of 1978.

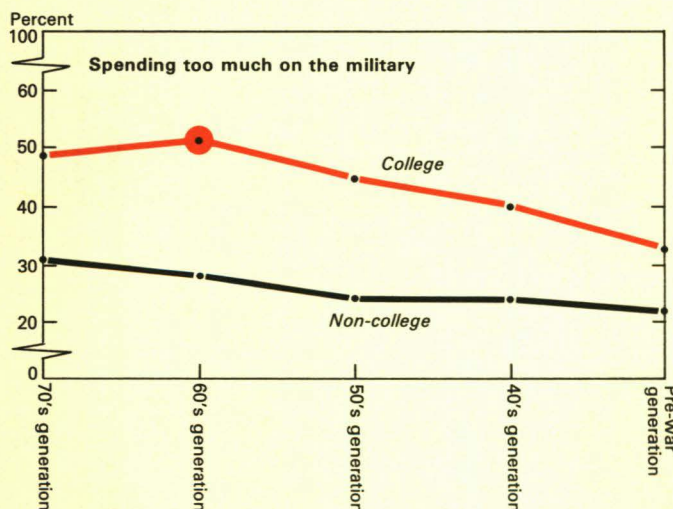
**Question:** We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount on . . . Improving and protecting the environment? (Asked 1973-1978)



**Spending too little on environment**

	Non-college	College
70's generation	75%	75%
60's generation	67	77
50's generation	56	62
40's generation	53	63
Pre-war generation	44	53

**Question:** We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount on . . . The military, armaments, and defense? (Asked 1973-1978)



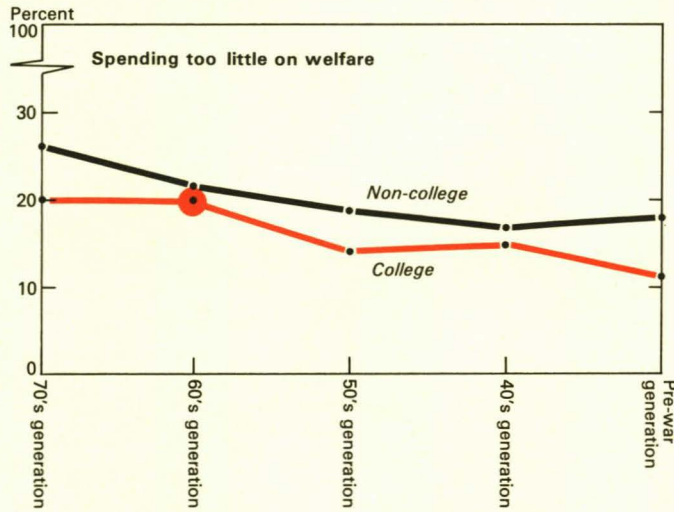
**Spending too much on military**

	Non-college	College
70's generation	31%	48%
60's generation	28	51
50's generation	24	45
40's generation	24	40
Pre-war generation	22	33



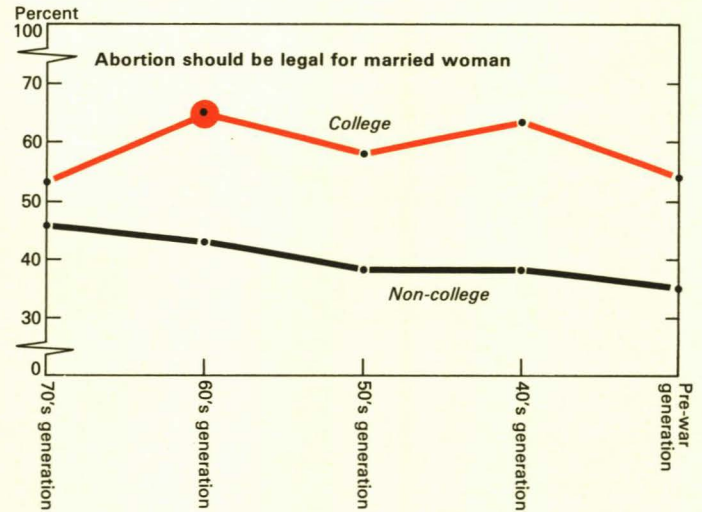
## OPINION ROUNDUP

**Question:** We are faced with many problems in this country, none of which can be solved easily or inexpensively. I'm going to name some of these problems, and for each one I'd like you to tell me whether you think we're spending too much money on it, too little money, or about the right amount on . . . Welfare? (Asked 1973-1978)



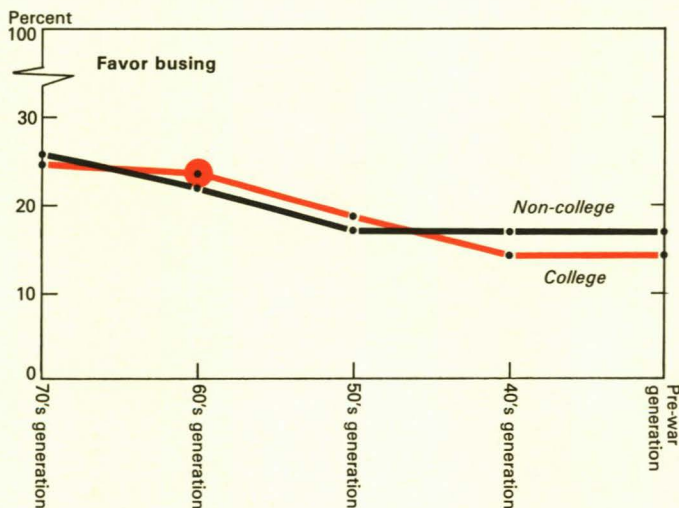
Spending too little on welfare	Non-college	College
70's generation	26%	20%
60's generation	21	20
50's generation	19	14
40's generation	17	15
Pre-war generation	18	11

**Question:** Please tell me whether or not you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if . . . she is married and does not want any more children? (Possible responses: yes, no) (Asked in 1972 through 1978)



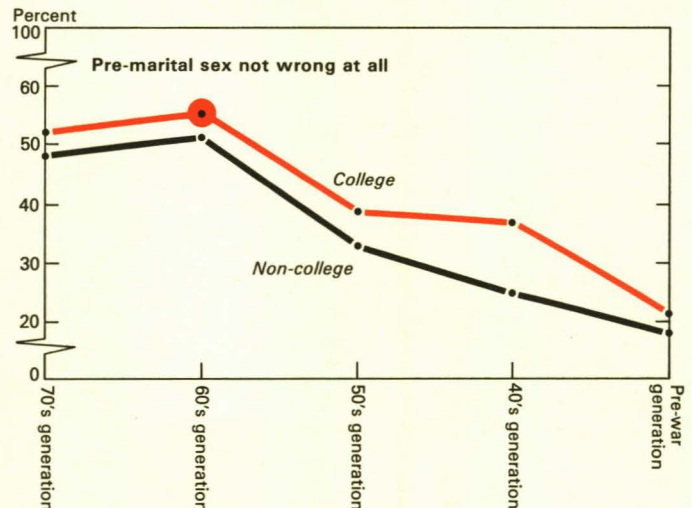
Abortion should be legal for married woman	Non-college	College
70's generation	46%	53%
60's generation	43	65
50's generation	38	58
40's generation	38	63
Pre-war generation	35	54

**Question:** In general, do you favor or oppose the busing of (Negro/black) and white school children from one district to another? (Asked in 1972, 1974 through 1978)



Favor busing	Non-college	College
70's generation	26%	25%
60's generation	22	24
50's generation	17	19
40's generation	17	14
Pre-war generation	17	14

**Question:** There's been a lot of discussion about the way morals and attitudes about sex are changing in this country. If a man and a woman have sex relations before marriage, do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all? (Asked in 1972, 1974, 1975, 1977 and 1978)



Pre-marital sex not wrong at all	Non-college	College
70's generation	48%	52%
60's generation	51	55
50's generation	33	39
40's generation	25	37
Pre-war generation	18	21



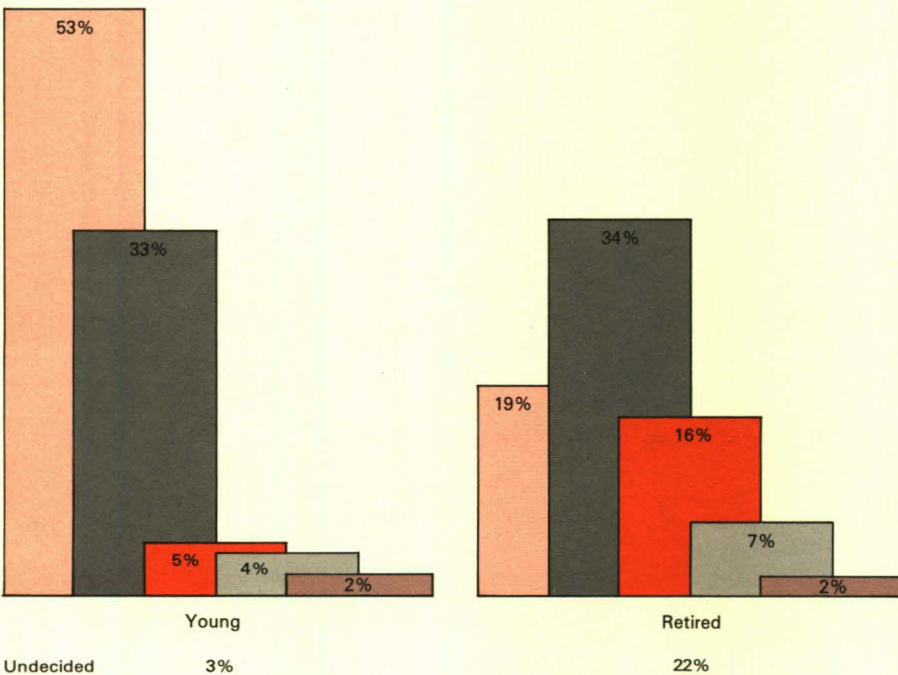
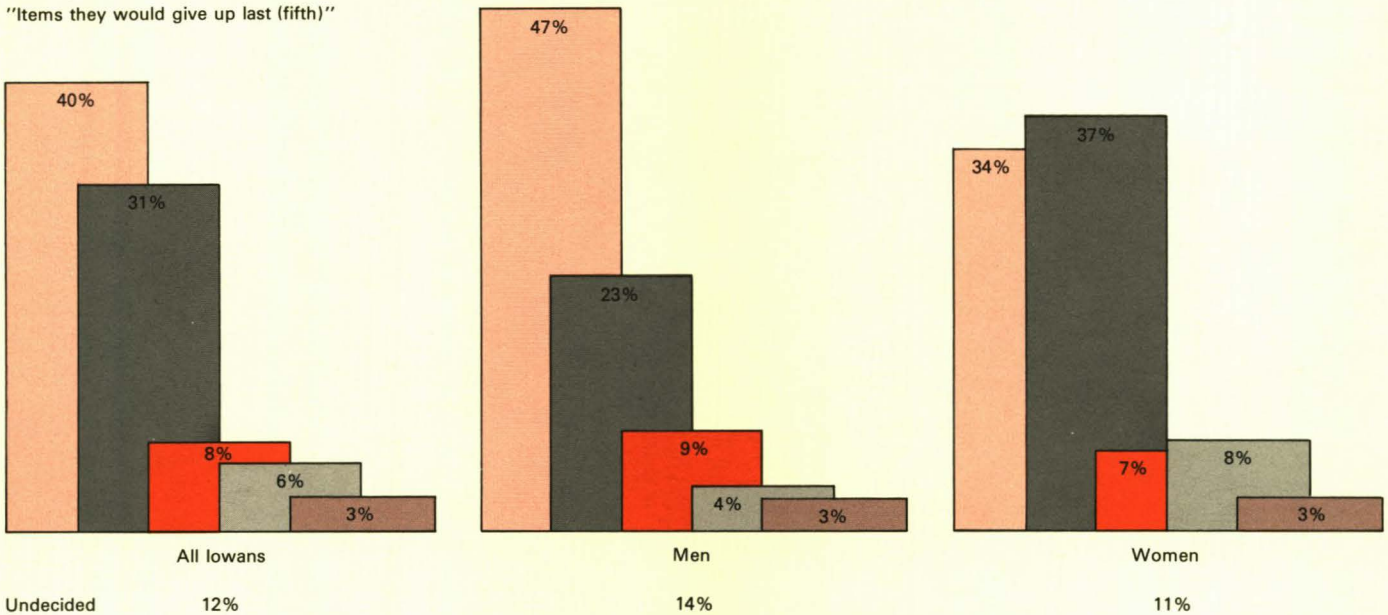
# Freud Wins Iowa Caucuses

**Question:** Suppose you had to give up certain things you enjoy. Which of these would you give up first? Second? Third? Fourth? Fifth? . . .

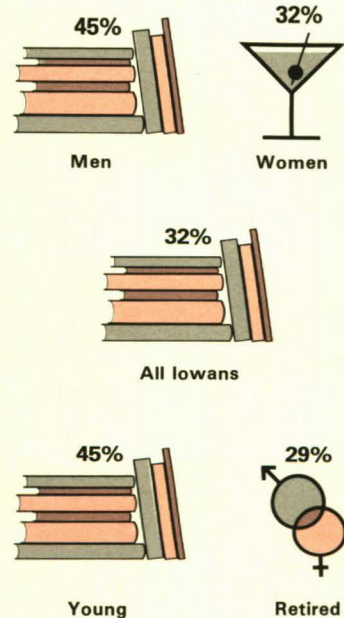
Sex    Seeing your best friend    Favorite food    Reading books    Favorite drink

Among Iowans

"Items they would give up last (fifth)"

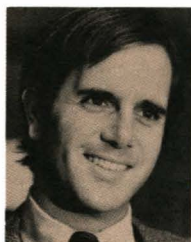


What They'd Give Up First...



Source: Survey by the Des Moines Register and Tribune Company, August 15-18, 1979.





by Michael Wheeler

## POLLS AND POLITICS

# Reining in Horserace Journalism

In a front page headline, the *New York Times* recently proclaimed: "Poll Finds Public Favor Reprisals if Iran Harms or Tries the Hostages." The following day, a headline in the *Boston Globe* announced: "Poll: Attack for Revenge Is Opposed."

Were these stories providing still more ammunition for critics of public opinion? Would the pollsters once again have to alibi that their questions were worded differently or that the surveys had captured volatile swings in opinion? Not this time, for despite the fact that their headlines cast opinion in radically different light, the *Times* and the *Globe* were actually reporting the results from an identical survey. There was only one poll and only one pollster: the Associated Press/NBC News survey team.

As it turned out, the headline writers in each case had seized on only half the story, for as in many surveys on delicate subjects, the AP/NBC team had detected substantial crosscurrents of opinion. As long as the hostages were unharmed, some 79 percent said they opposed military retaliation; but if the hostages suffered, attitudes shifted and some 66 percent said they supported a military attack.

This tale—and there are many others like it—illustrates one of the most challenging problems facing the public opinion industry today. While pollsters gather up increasing amounts of information each year, they must inevitably communicate most of their findings through the filter of the public press. Even political candidates, business leaders, and interest groups who commission their own private surveys usually read the results in the context of what they have learned

about public opinion from television and the daily press. Yet, on occasion after occasion, press coverage of public opinion is at best superficial, and all too often, misleading and distorted.

What's gone wrong? How badly cracked is the lens of the press? And what, if anything, can pollsters and journalists do to correct the problem? Those are the questions that we will try to address here.

### The Problems in the Newsroom

Any constructive criticism of press treatment of the polls must be mindful of the constraints within which newspapers and television must operate. It is unfair to demand of a daily paper the same degree of sophistication and documentation that should be found in scholarly journals. To identify these constraints is not to apologize for poor reporting; rather, it helps to understand what may prompt it and to suggest ways to improve it.

One obvious limitation is space. While the Gallup and Harris organizations typically send out press releases of a spare 750 words, most newspapers trim them back to a few paragraphs. Television time is even more precious than newspaper space, and the commonly assumed need for stories with visual appeal means that network coverage of polls is usually limited to a quick look at who is ahead and who is behind.

A second constraint is economic. Original research costs money, and a news organization may find that the outlay required for one serious national poll could support a good reporter for the better part of a year. Except for the leading newspaper in each state—for



example, the *Des Moines Register*, the *Boston Globe*, etc.—most local newspapers and television stations limit themselves to subscribing to someone else's work. Ironically, the television networks can best afford intensive polling, but have been least adept at presenting their findings to the public.

National newsmagazines and larger newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* bear the expense of underwriting their own polls not merely in a quest for political truth, but to advance their competitive interests as well. Albert H. Cantril, the president of the National Council of Public Polls in Washington, has observed, "The considerable sums spent on polling must therefore be viewed, in large part, as an investment toward building an audience. Polling often becomes a means rather than an end in itself."<sup>1</sup> Having one's own pollster is clearly a sign of playing in the journalistic big leagues, and it is also an effective promotion vehicle. By copyrighting their polls, the newspapers and the networks insure that they will be publicly identified with "making news."

These two factors reinforce a third constraint in media reporting: the need for drama. It is news when the president's approval rating shoots up or down, but it is less interesting when he simply holds steady. Thus, there is pressure for public pollsters to generate results that show conflict on important issues or depict constantly shifting support for candidates. Daniel Yankelovich has properly decried this "horserace journalism," but the temptation has proven hard to resist.

### Six of the Worst Sins

Even with the competition for space, the cost of research, and the need for timely news, however, it hardly seems unreasonable to expect better public opinion coverage, for these constraints do not fully excuse some of the most conspicuous sins of journalism.

In my view (and any individual's catalogue of press failings is bound to be idiosyncratic), the most flagrant error of the press is the common practice of reporting polls as if each American holds a firm opinion on every topic. Well into 1979, for example, most newspaper polls reported that the SALT II treaties were supported by an overwhelming majority. What they failed to disclose was that most people literally did not know the first thing about SALT. A CBS News/*New York Times* survey, not widely reported, found in January 1979 that only 23 percent could accurately identify the two nations that were negotiating the treaty. In June of 1979, the CBS News/*Times* survey also commendably reported that 27 percent said they supported ratification of SALT II, 9 percent said they opposed it, while a full 64 percent stated that they knew too little to state an opinion. Unfortunately, few other published

polls noted the extent of public ignorance on the issue.<sup>2</sup> Such an omission not only misrepresents opinion, but also constitutes a lost opportunity. One of the potential virtues of polling is the identification of those issues on which the public needs more education from both elected officials and the press.

A second, related trap for journalists is the failure to distinguish between voter opinion and public opinion. On the eve of elections, most published pollsters go to great lengths to sift out nonvoters; with turnout in national elections dwindling down to barely 50 percent, it is essential to sample the right population. By contrast, most early trial heats include all adults or all registered voters. That a candidate has decent overall support does not necessarily mean that he or she will be able to galvanize the actual voters (ask Senator Kennedy). Moreover, the national preference polls conducted early in presidential campaigns shed little light on the future course of events, as both primaries and finals are fought state by state.

Third, in the campaign polls, the press too often accepts a hypothesis that is contrary to fact. Pollsters commonly ask people in the spring and summer how they would vote "if the election were held today." Obviously, however, people's interest in campaigns will be low until the actual voting day approaches. Thus, when the numbers fluctuate from spring to fall, that is not necessarily a sign that opinion has changed, only that there has been a change in the environment in which opinion is formed. More discouraging, these early trial heats often crowd out polls that are much more revealing. As late as this past September, Gallup was reporting—but few were carrying—the fact that voters recognized the names of only six of eighteen potential Republican presidential contenders; a more rigorous test, in which people were required to identify each man, would likely have revealed even less familiarity. Still, the fact that 91 percent claimed to know the identity of Ronald Reagan, as opposed to 58 percent who could identify Howard Baker and the 38 percent who could say the same of George Bush, reveals much more than a hypothetical trial heat. Not only does it identify those candidates who have yet to make a national impact, but it also underscores the degree to which a frontrunner's lead may be due to simple name recognition—and thus, how fragile that lead may be. It would be intriguing if newspapers conscientiously tracked name recognition throughout a campaign to see what kind of impact the candidates are able to make over time.

Fourth, journalistic reporting of political campaigns is often flawed because it fails to tell the reader who is best positioned to pick up support along the way. If

<sup>1</sup> Cantril, "The Press and the Pollster," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, September 1976, vol. 427, p. 47. Cantril lists as "stringent requirements on the kind of polling that is done" for the press: brevity, topicality, timeliness, clarity, and broad appeal.

<sup>2</sup> Even sophisticated poll watchers sometimes have to be reminded not to publicize data based on insignificant samples. A recent issue of *Public Opinion* included an ethnic breakout on a question involving American foreign policy, yet added this curious note: "The numbers of blacks and Jews in this survey are too small for statistical reliability. These groups are included for informational purposes." Meaningless numbers can only be misinformational.



newspapers are intent on publishing the latest head-to-head races, then they should have their pollsters also ask about second choices. ABC News released a provocative poll in November of 1979 showing that 33 percent expressed no preference for president among candidates of either party. Even Kennedy, the leader at the time, could muster only 29 percent to Jimmy Carter's 17; Reagan, the top Republican, had only 9 percent. Obviously, the ultimate winner will have to assemble a broader coalition of voters, many of whom were initially inclined to support someone else. In the same vein, too few newspapers explore connections between support for candidates and their stands on issues. Instead of simply reporting that a candidate is drawing a certain percentage of the vote, it would be revealing to see the basis for that support. Often there is a seeming contradiction between a candidate's strength and popular opinion on important issues: are people supporting the candidate in spite of his views or in ignorance of them?

*Fifth*, it is disheartening how little the press does with issue polls in their own right. In late 1979, newspaper pollsters reported that a majority of Americans had come to favor an increase in defense spending. Even without probing deeply, it should not be too much to ask how people think this increase should be spent: is it supported primarily as a symbolic gesture, or do people genuinely feel the need for more combat troops or supercarriers? And how does the apparent support for greater defense appropriations square with the supposed support for a balanced federal budget? If the fact that people now claim they favor more defense spending is worth reporting, then it also makes sense to explore what that statement means.

*Finally*, if there is one pervasive omission in the reporting of polls, it is the failure to acknowledge varying intensities of opinion. This failure is true not just in the context of presidential opinion polls but in election and issue surveys as well. Describing where support is firm and where it is fluid not only provides a more accurate picture of opinion at the time the poll was taken, but it also offers important clues about how it may change in the future.

### **The Path to Repentance**

Addressing these shortcomings does not require a great deal more newspaper space or television time, nor does it necessarily mean greater expense. It certainly need not detract from the drama of unfolding news. What is essential, however, is that both pollsters and journalists face up to these "sins," for only then can they be overcome.

As this analysis suggests, it would be unfair to lay much of the blame on the pollster's doorstep. Often, the individual poll taker has little control over the way that his research is published. In the case of the Iranian poll mentioned earlier, both the *New York Times* and the *Boston Globe* gleaned the same information from

wire stories but then, for their own reasons, presented it quite differently. Even the most established pollsters like Gallup and Harris complain that their client newspapers often compromise their columns by lopping off those paragraphs that provide context and depth.

A pollster's ultimate leverage is, of course, to quit working for a client who abuses the material. In 1978, for example, the Research Information Center of Arizona stopped conducting the Minnesota Poll for the *Minneapolis Tribune* because, it said, the newspaper editors had intentionally altered the results of a survey before publishing it (the editors were of a decidedly different view; see *Public Opinion*, November/December 1978, page 60). Few polling organizations have taken such a strong stand—and for obvious reasons. Although pollsters claim that newspaper work is not nearly as profitable as private research, their complaint has the ring of McDonald's contending that it loses money on the hamburger patty but makes it up on the bun: in both cases it takes one to sell the other. Few pollsters can afford to spurn visibility and credibility that comes with publicly reported polling.

Collectively, however, pollsters do have greater potential to influence press reporting than they are now exercising. Professional associations like the American Association for Public Opinion Research and the National Council on Public Polls have already made some headway in educating editors to distinguish between serious research and sham polls. In late 1979, for example, the NCPP put backbone in its former guidelines by requiring its members to adhere to "principles of disclosure" under which all releases for publication must include a statement on polling methodology. Adoption of the more stringent code came only after years of debate and negotiation within the organization. The sticking point was how to achieve specific, enforceable standards without violating restraint of trade laws and the due process interests of member pollsters.

In another notable attempt to help working journalists sort through the polling thicket, four of the country's leading political pollsters—Patrick Caddell, Peter Hart, Robert Teeter, and Richard Wirthlin—organized an all-day briefing at the beginning of the current presidential campaign to discuss the pitfalls of political surveys. Some forty journalists attended in Washington. Along the same lines, the National Council on Public Polls and the Kettering Foundation organized a one-day conference on Polling on the Issues that was held in Washington this winter. (For a glimpse at the proceedings, please see the article by Burns W. Roper in this issue.)

### **A Need for Better Interpretation**

Although it is hard to measure the impact of these forms of self-policing and education, they likely have had a beneficial effect over the years. Many newspapers do seem somewhat more careful to note sample size and range of chance error; the old street corner surveys



seem to have fallen into disfavor. At the same time, however, these efforts may have unintentionally lulled journalists into believing that so long as there is full statistical disclosure, a poll is certified for publication. Reliability may be confused with validity.

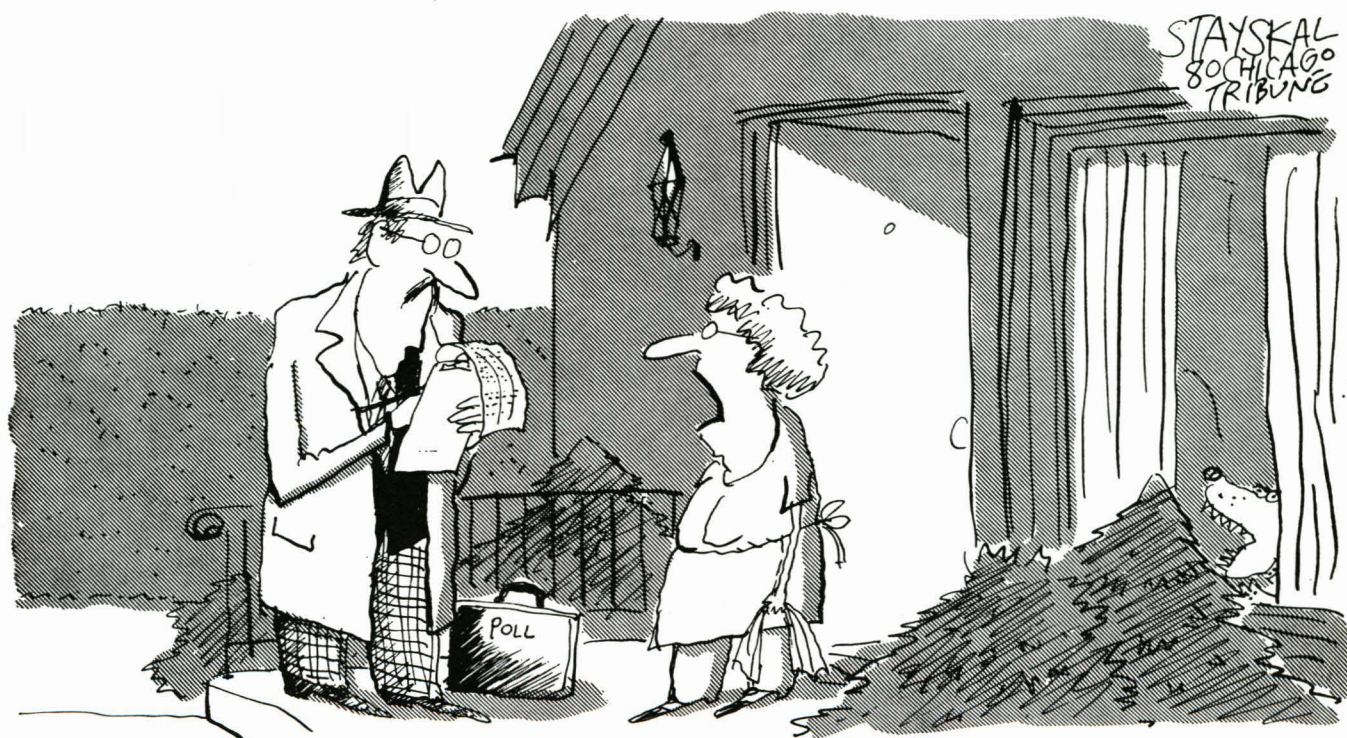
In fact, the most glaring errors in public opinion reporting stem not from poor methodology, but from glib, unimaginative, or slanted analysis. Too many editors fail to recognize that the value of opinion research rests not only on the gathering of specific responses of an identified sample but also on the interpretation of those responses. While the former is amenable to precise quantitative techniques, the latter usually is not.

It is here in the area of interpretation that the polling associations could make a far larger contribution. If their reporting is to be meaningful, the press should clearly be as well educated about the interpretation of public opinion as about the methodology of gathering it.

Some pollsters, most notably George Gallup, insist that their sole function is to collect the figures and that it is for others to analyze them as they may. Interpretation, they say, is inherently subjective and taints the pure science of polling. Yet, even the simplest of public polls is laden with interpretation, albeit often implicit. It is, for example, an objective, incontrovertible fact that of the 1,600 Americans interviewed in a mid-1979 AP/NBC News survey, 26 percent chose the adjectives "excellent" or "good" to describe President Carter's per-

formance in the White House, while 52 percent picked "fair" and 20 percent said "poor" (2 percent were undecided). By contrast, when the pollster himself chooses to characterize "fair" as unfavorable instead of neutral or positive, that is a matter of interpretation. Granted, this negative characterization is common practice, but it is not universal. Thus, depending wholly on the pollster's interpretation, Carter's mid-1979 favorability rating was either 26 percent or 78 percent. Perhaps some pollsters would say that either figure could be used and that the real key is whether it is going up or down, but 26 percent looks like a vote of no confidence, while 78 percent may be read as a mandate for the status quo. It should be at least as important to alert editors—and their readers—to the wide range of possible interpretation as it is to note sampling error. Indeed, the standard warning about a 3 or 4 point chance variation doubtlessly misleads some readers into believing that the whole report is valid to that degree.

In their periodic reports, neither Gallup nor Harris let their presidential approval ratings hang in a vacuum. Both men often make historical references in order to provide context for their numbers, but this, too, raises issues of interpretation. Last summer, for example, the Harris survey reported that, "President Jimmy Carter's standing with the American people is now the lowest for any President in modern political history." Putting aside the shaky statistical basis for such a conclusion (Carter held a 25 percent positive rating, compared to



"PUT ME DOWN FOR 'NO COMMENT' ON THAT ONE... I REALLY HAVEN'T READ ENOUGH POLLS ON THE SUBJECT TO FORM AN OPINION!"

Reprinted by permission of the Chicago Tribune-New York News Syndicate, Inc.



Nixon's prior record low, 26 percent), the fact that the two numbers were equivalent does not necessarily mean that Carter suffered the same degree of disapproval that Nixon did. Some astute poll watchers saw signs, such as the lack of intense opposition to Carter and continued personal respect for him, that his stock was still salvageable,<sup>3</sup> whereas by 1974, Nixon's almost certainly was not.

That subsequent developments appear to have confirmed this latter view is not the point. Rather it is that even the simplest, seemingly most objective statements about public opinion usually rest on premises that are open to debate and that may be proven wrong in time.

While it should hardly be necessary to belabor the point, there is little in the present reporting of public opinion that reveals much journalistic appreciation of this fundamental fact. The press's failure to come to grips with the interpretative side of opinion research may have been reinforced by the pollsters' own preoccupation with the technology of sample design. This is not to argue, of course, that the NCPP should repeal its disclosure principles. What it indicates instead is that the NCPP and other polling associations should apply similar imagination and energy to the matter of analysis.

Two obstacles have forestalled progress in matters of interpretation. First, although pollsters generally agree on what constitutes sound sampling technique, there are no consensus principles governing analysis. The fact that it took the better part of a decade to get most of the members of the NCPP to agree to enforce simple disclosure standards suggests there is little prospect that the organization will ever discipline members for shoddy interpretation. Second, even if there were specific analytic standards, it is difficult to see how they could be made binding upon the press.

In the absence of legal sanctions, however, pollsters would better serve the public and themselves by developing other educational devices. One modest step would be to commend examples of responsible opinion reporting and to condemn bad works. Often it is easier to teach by specific cases instead of broad principles. A group like the NCPP—or for that matter, a magazine like this one—could follow the lead of the *Columbia Journalism Review* which for years has awarded "darts" and "laurels" for reporting that is either exceptionally bad or good. It is unrealistic to expect that such awards would generate the widespread publicity of Senator Proxmire's monthly "Golden Fleece," but they might reach the intended audience, the press itself. Perhaps the prize for the most distorted coverage of public opinion could be called the "Pox Populi."

#### Reforms Should Start at Home

Ultimately, if there is to be genuine improvement

in the reporting of public opinion, the impetus must come from within the press itself. So far, a call for self-improvement within the Fourth Estate has hardly been deafening. Perhaps, the press has become too inbred to the old tradition of subcontracting out a large measure of the reporting to the pollsters themselves. That a newspaper pays for a polltaker's numbers, however, does not mean that it should abdicate its own responsibility to interpret them. Newspapers, magazines, and television networks that are serious about covering public opinion should have in-house specialists or editors who can coordinate coverage and tap a host of sources—including polls not sponsored by that particular organization.

Several years ago, Seymour Martin Lipset and William Schneider stated that it "is most worrisome when one pollster has become the primary interpreter of American public opinion to the President of the United States"; instead, they argued, the White House "should be furnished with the full gamut of findings, interpreted by experts who do not have a stake in the validity of any one poll."<sup>4</sup> The Kennedy campaign has apparently picked up on this cue in hiring Peter Hart to do much of its polling, while retaining Gary Orren of Brandeis University to provide an independent view. If this makes sense for officeholders and candidates, then perhaps the press should follow suit.

The *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times* have used academic researchers to help prepare and analyze their surveys, but ideally a public opinion editor should be responsible for the way all polls are treated in his newspaper or news-magazine. (Barry Sussman now performs that service for the *Post*.) Much of the value of careful in-house polling is undercut if it must compete for attention with surveys that have simply been pulled off the wire. A public opinion editor could be a resource for reporters and columnists and should give guidance to copy editors and headline writers. Such a person need not be a statistician—and in line with Lipset and Schneider's warning, certainly should not be polling himself—but obviously a comprehensive knowledge of poll results, present and past, is essential.

The domain of the public opinion editor should not be limited to survey data, for polls are best reported in context with other indices, such as voting patterns, turnout, purchasing trends, television ratings—anything that may reveal how people think. Apart, these signs may go unnoticed or make little sense, but properly synthesized, they can illuminate the opinion landscape. It is ironic that even though there is no dearth of data, the press is plowing ever more money into collecting public opinion, when what is called for is an equivalent commitment to its interpretation and presentation. ☐

<sup>3</sup> Warren J. Mitofsky and Kathleen A. Frankovic, "Don't Count Jimmy Carter Out," *Public Opinion*, August/September 1979.

<sup>4</sup> Lipset and Schneider, "Polls for the White House and the Rest of Us," *Encounter*, November 1977, vol. 49, pp. 33-34.





by Burns W. Roper

## POLLS AND POLITICS

# The Media and the Polls:

There are ten significant effects of journalism on polling that I see—and, I might add, see with the eyes of an opinion researcher, not those of a journalist. Eight of these effects are negative, two are positive, and all ten can be described in less time than it takes to conduct an overnight poll.

(1) The initial impact of journalism was to retard the growth of polling. Newsmen a few decades ago saw polling as competitive, as an invasion of the newsman's function and prerogatives. As a result, the news media avoided publishing or airing poll results as much as possible so that polls did not achieve the visibility that they now have and that they deserved back in the thirties, forties, and fifties.

(2) On those occasions when the news media did report poll results in earlier years, they showed little critical judgment or discrimination about what they reported. They had little understanding of polling or of what constituted good polling, and they tended to give the bad at least equal weight with the good. In the 1960s, for example, a major newspaper reported the results of an Ohio congressman's mail poll among his constituents as a page one story in the Sunday edition. Buried at the bottom of a column on about page 35 was a four-inch report on a Gallup poll on exactly the same subject, but showing quite different results. The level of sophistication of this paper—and it was by no means unique—was such that the editors assumed that 4,000 returns from a mail survey were superior to a national sample of 1,500 respondents, even though the 4,000 returns represented only 2 percent of the questionnaires sent out. For reasons I don't understand, the media became converts to polls during the 1970s—converts to such a point that many of them set up their own survey units.

(3) The media converts have made a mistake, however, in taking a bright newsman, sending him to a two- or six-week course on polling techniques and then establishing him as their survey expert. They have installed promising trainees where they should have hired experienced veterans. No offense is intended here to the individuals involved. To illustrate my point, I would not be at all offended if columnist Jack Germond did not think I could be city editor of the *Washington Star* after two weeks of training, or Barry Sussman of the *Washington Post* did not think I could be a bureau chief of his newspaper after six weeks of training.

(4) Partly because of their lack of deep expertise, reporters have overstressed sampling error and understressed the other more important and considerably greater sources of error. And, in the process of stressing sampling error, they have not warned the reader or viewer of error as they have intended. Instead they have implied an unwarranted degree of accuracy. They have said in effect, "This finding is within 3 percentage points of what the entire American public thinks on this subject"—when, in fact, a differently worded question might and often does produce a result that is 25 to 30 points different from the reported results.

(5) Historically the media have reported—or over-reported, underreported, or not reported at all—what others have said and done. But it was what *others* said or did that was their concern. Now that they have gotten into the polling business, they have changed their function. They are now in the position of making news, not merely reporting it. And this presents them with some problems.

(6) As a result of having their own polls, the media have a natural inclination to push their own polls. NBC (and it is by no means alone) is not eager to



# A Boxscore

devote the same attention to the Gallup poll that it devotes to the NBC poll. Nor does it feature the CBS poll as prominently as CBS does. And this is particularly true when the results of another poll conflict with and raise doubts about the sponsoring medium's own poll. When was the last time an anchorman announced, "Yesterday we reported that our poll showed X. A Gallup poll released today casts serious doubt on the validity of that finding"?

(7) The news media have put an unwarranted premium on speed. Any poll result that is more than four days old isn't worth reporting, or so they think. A quick reading, with a hastily drawn questionnaire, using a telephone sample is far more significant to the average news medium than is a personal interview survey with a carefully drawn questionnaire, administered after the dust has settled. Yet what they tap is often the initial or first reaction, not the considered

judgment.

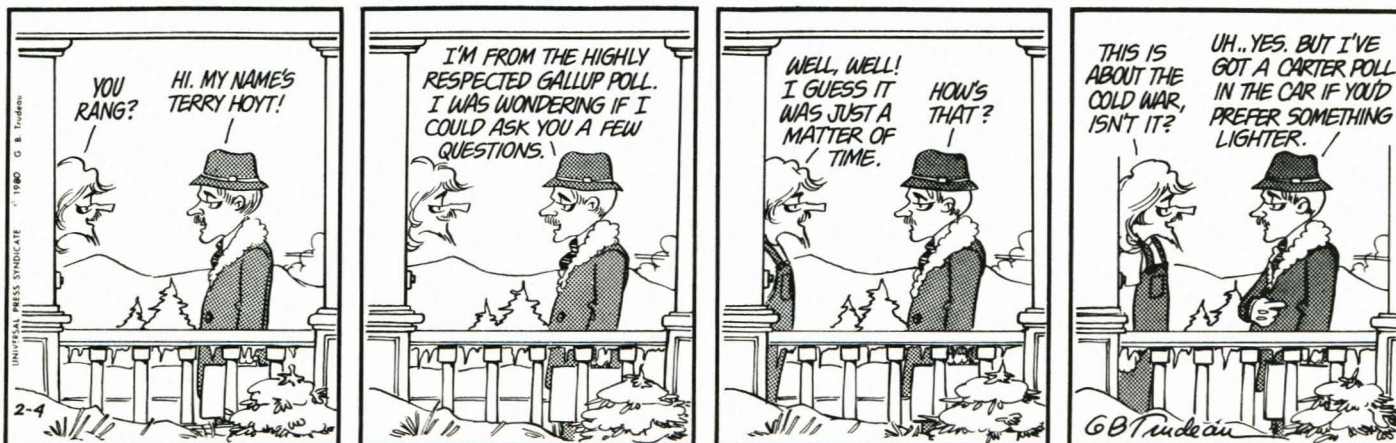
(8) Related to this speed consideration, but also partly a function of the telephone interview method, complex issues tend to be dealt with in oversimplified questions that are designed not to exceed ten to fifteen words.

Those are the eight negatives I see. Now for the two positives:

(9) The emphasis the news media put on speed does have its positive side. It has resulted not only in the news media polls being processed and reported fast, but in some of the non-media polls being reported faster as well. In the last couple of months, for example, in our polling at Roper, we have cut a full two weeks out of the processing and reporting schedule. This is, quite frankly, a simple response to the fact that if a poll is more than four days old, the news media see little utility in it.

## DOONESBURY

by Garry Trudeau



© 1980, G. B. Trudeau, used by permission of Universal Press Syndicate. All rights reserved.



(10) The pendulum swing from media *resistance* to polls to a media *embrace* of polls has also created a broad awareness and acceptance of polling which it would not have otherwise. If the media held back polling in the earlier days, they have more than made up for it in the past few years. By their conversion to polls, the media have given the public a louder voice than it has had heretofore.

\* \* \*

In closing, a few other observations are in order. Points One and Two are now unimportant because they are water over the dam. The media are no longer inhibiting the acceptance of polling. Quite the contrary. Moreover, as the press has gotten more interested in polls, it has become better informed about them and more discriminating as between good and bad polls. Point Three will take care of itself over time, since the

bright young men with two to six weeks of training will eventually become seasoned veterans. When this happens, the overstressing of sampling error and the understressing of other sources of error will probably disappear, as will the overstress on speed and on simplistic questions that measure first, top-of-the-head reactions.

It is Points Five and Six that continue to be of concern. Today's media—at least, those that have their own polls—face not only a full disclosure problem but a conflict of interest problem, too. The broadcast media almost never tell listeners what question they asked of respondents. They merely come up with their conclusion and the percentage results from an unknown question. All too often, the print media also do not reveal the question they have asked—again, just the percentage result and the conclusions are set forth. Thus, the

## Reading the Signals in

Each new presidential campaign—and this one is certainly no exception—seems to raise two important questions: How can polls show such sharp changes in attitudes in such short periods of time? And, why do polls so often disagree with each other?

### Volatility

Basically, there are two reasons why polls can show great volatility, and both pertain in the present political environment. The first is a comparative disinterest on the part of the public until late in a campaign, so that respondents tend to be unfamiliar with and mercurial about the various candidates. The second is the timing of different polls and the events that may intervene.

Both of these factors are particularly important in the early stages of an election campaign. Historically, the Gallup poll has shown its greatest one-month change in presidential candidate preferences in the weeks before and after the New Hampshire primary. The large shifts that have occurred after that primary have demonstrated both the instability of public opinion and the effect of intervening events.

In this year's presidential race, the Iowa caucuses—given enormous attention by the networks and the national press—have replaced the New Hampshire primary as the "first" in a series of "election events." A CBS News/*New York Times* nationwide telephone survey conducted among Republicans prior to this year's Iowa caucuses showed Ronald Reagan as the preferred candidate of 45 percent, George Bush as the

first choice of only 6 percent. A *Newsweek*/Gallup poll, conducted three days after the Iowa voting, using the same question, and also conducted nationwide by telephone among Republicans, showed Reagan ahead of Bush by a narrow 33-27 percent margin—a rise of 21 points for Bush and a decline of 12 points for Reagan in just a dozen days.

Different results between identically timed polls can be accounted for in several ways. One factor can be differences in the universes that are sampled. One poll may report the preferences of all adults, another may report the preferences of Democrats only, and still another the preferences of Democrats and Independents. The differences can be significant. Polls have shown, for example, that Senator Kennedy fares better with Democrats alone than with Democrats and Independents combined in the same poll; he also has higher ratings in surveys of all adults than in polls of likely voters.

### Posing the Question

Another reason for "discrepancies" between two polls is the wording of the question asked. A well-known national poll in April of 1979 reported 68 percent in favor of the then proposed SALT treaty. Our survey at the time showed only 33 percent favoring SALT II. The difference was clearly due to more than "sampling error." The question which produced the 68 percent sentiment was: "Do you favor or oppose a new agreement between the United States and Russia which would limit nuclear weapons?" Our question, with a 33 percent

sentiment, was: "The U.S. and Russian negotiators have about reached an agreement on a SALT treaty. The treaty would last until 1985, limits each country to a maximum of 2,250 long-range nuclear missiles and bombers. As you know, there's a good deal of controversy about this proposed treaty. Do you think the U.S. Senate should vote for this new SALT treaty or against it?"

When one looks at the two questions involved, the difference becomes quite understandable.

Still another factor that affects results is the context of the question. The Roper poll, for example, has asked a number of times about national health insurance versus private health insurance. On several occasions, we have asked this question following other questions about the respondent's access to a doctor, satisfaction of the respondent with the quality of medical care, the availability of medical care, its cost and present provisions for paying those costs. In this context, the subsequent question on national health insurance has elicited greater sentiment for private than public health plans. When the *same* question is asked by itself, following no other medical questions, it finds the public favoring national over private health insurance. The "swing" or difference is not large, but the pattern is consistent over a number of surveys.

The combined effects of intervening events, timing, question wording, and instability of opinion were demonstrated early in the Iranian crisis. Prior to the seizure of the embassy in early November, a Roper poll showed a 39 percent



listener or reader has no way of evaluating the results.

One solution is for the press always to include the question wording when reporting the results of a survey. In my judgment, that would be a far better use of time and space than to put in the wholly misleading plus-or-minus-3-percent-error statement. The media contend that they don't have the time or space to devote to question wording, but somehow they always manage to find the time and space to assure readers and listeners that they can count on these results to within plus or minus 3 percentage points. An alternative to revealing the question asked would be to adopt a policy to devote equal time or space to the results of a reputable poll which showed different or contrary results from the media's own polls.

These problems of disclosure and conflict of interests are serious matters for those newspapers and net-

works that have their own polls. If and when they can find an effective way of dealing with those problems, the two positives I have cited will not merely offset the eight negatives. Then, in fact, the effects of journalism on polling will become entirely positive. ☑

In November, the National Council on Public Polls and the Charles F. Kettering Foundation sponsored a program in Washington entitled Polling on the Issues. The purpose of the program was to look at the impact of polls on public policy and their reporting by the media. We are grateful to the sponsors for giving us permission to publish Burns Roper's address to the group. The proceedings of Polling on the Issues will be published in book form soon. Information about the book may be obtained by contacting the Communication Office, Charles F. Kettering Foundation, 5335 Far Hills Road, Dayton, Ohio 45429.

## Today's Political Polls by Burns W. Roper

"approval" rating of President Carter. The Gallup poll showed a 31 percent "approval" rating. In early December, our poll showed Carter with a 53 percent "approval" rating—up a sharp 14 points in five weeks. However, the Gallup poll, which had earlier shown a lower approval rating than ours, shot up 30 points, with 61 percent approving.

Clearly, the hostage seizure, Carter's handling of it, and the "rally 'round the President" syndrome had a dramatic and positive boost in the polls in just one month. But why did the Gallup poll shoot up so much further than the Roper survey? Or, to put it another way, why did Roper not show as much of a spurt as Gallup? Which is right?

Neither—or both. In my judgment, the answer lies in the wording of two questions. The Roper question asked people to characterize *themselves* as supporters or critics of the President. Gallup asked about *approval* or *disapproval* of the way Carter is handling his job. While both questions are affected by personal feelings about the President as a man *and* about his performance as President, our question is affected more by the former and the Gallup question more by the latter. Hence, a person can rally around and "approve" the job he has done on the hostage crisis ("for once in his life") but still not change from "critic" to "supporter."

### Sampling Error Fraud

Many journalists (and their readers), unaware of the reasons that usually account for poll variability, assume the

too common explanation of "sampling error" to account for discrepancies—and even volatility. In my view, this is *usually* an erroneous conclusion.

Consider the following hypothetical situation with respect to public preference for the Democratic candidate for President.

	Census of all U.S. adults	Poll A	Poll B
Prefer Demo- cratic candi- date	50.0%	53.1% (reported as 53%)	46.9% (reported as 47%)
Actual error		+3.1 percent- age pts.	-3.1 percent- age pts.

Such a difference between Polls A and B would commonly be explained as "sampling error" since the standard poll of 1,500 to 2,000 individuals would have a sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. This means that five times out of a hundred a poll can be expected to differ from the true answer by more than 3 percentage points—as each of the above polls does. But since the formula only means that five times out of a hundred a poll result will be *either* 3 points above *or* 3 points below the true answer, the likelihood of Poll A being more than 3 points *above* is 2.5 chances out of a hundred—or one chance out of forty. Similarly, the chance of Poll B being more than 3 points below the true value (rather than

3 points above *or* below) is one out of forty. Because the chance occurrence of either Poll A or Poll B showing these results is one chance out of forty, the chances of *both* happening are one out of 1,600 ( $1/40 \times 1/40$ ).

The chance of such a discrepancy occurring a second time (as happened during the 1976 election campaign) approaches the near impossible, based on sampling error alone. The chance of it happening one time is one out of 1,600; thus, the chance of it happening once again is also one out of 1,600. The chance of Polls A and B showing more than a 6 percentage point difference twice in a row, and in the same direction, due to the sampling error alone, would have to be *one in 2½ million* ( $1/1600 \times 1/1600$ ).

While sampling error is a legitimate mathematical truth to statisticians, it serves as both a scientific certification and a "cop out" for many pollsters, and as a "cuddle blanket" for journalists that impedes understanding by them—and by their audience.

Finally, if public opinion is so volatile, why are public opinion measurements important? Well, mostly, public opinion is not that volatile. Even when it is, the mere fact that public opinion is unstable and can easily be influenced by question wording and by events is important to know. It should tell a candidate, for example, that he is not out of contention because of a 10 point drop in "the polls." It should also tell a candidate that he does not necessarily have the nomination wrapped up because he has moved into first place in "the polls." ☑





by Alan J. Baron

## POLLS AND POLITICS

# The Almanac of Political Pollsters: 1980

**E**arly in 1970, a young Harvard undergraduate named Patrick Caddell wrote to Iowa Senator Harold Hughes, offering his polling services for Hughes's potential presidential campaign. Caddell, who had started polling for Democratic candidates while in high school, was determined to enter presidential politics. And Hughes seemed an ideal vehicle: he was a long-shot, unlikely to retain a high-priced, big-name pollster; he was against the Vietnam War, as was Caddell; and he seemed to be just the kind of candidate—a reformed alcoholic, ex-truck driver, midwesterner, and born-again Protestant—who could appeal to the “populists” Caddell saw as essential for a White House victory. Later, Caddell would say that Hughes “seemed to combine the basic appeals of McGovern and Carter.”

But Hughes declined to enter the race for president; front-running Senator Edmund Muskie seemed uninterested in Caddell's help; and the young pollster remained determined to get involved in the presidential race. So he turned to another alternative: Senator George McGovern of South Dakota.

McGovern's campaign manager, Gary Hart, was interested in Caddell for two reasons. First, he seemed to have a keen mind and a good grasp of political trends. Second, McGovern was poor and Caddell was cheap.

### The Rise of Pat Caddell

In the months which followed, George McGovern's candidacy skyrocketed. He went from 1 percent in the polls to the Democratic nomination. And his success mystified the press and the professional politicians alike. They knew McGovern and were convinced he was too radical ideologically and too boring politically

to do what he was doing. So they searched for a reason, and soon they found one: Pat Caddell.

This Caddell fellow must have something up his sleeve, they reasoned. His surveys, numbers, graphs, and charts must have given McGovern his edge.

Overnight, Caddell became the new star of polling and politics, as he explained to reporters and contributors how McGovern was riding the “alienation” of blue collar and working-class Democrats to victory. Caddell's words were magic. And, in the general election, reports of Caddell's predictions of a McGovern upsurge helped raise millions. Caddell says now that the reports were fabricated by McGovern fundraisers, and they probably were.

There was, of course, some substance to the Caddell magic. He was an important strategist in the McGovern campaign—urging McGovern, for example, to make Muskie's failure to disclose the names of his contributors a central issue in New Hampshire. “That issue was the key to our success,” McGovern manager Frank Mankiewicz said later.

But Caddell was at least as good a salesman as strategist, and it was the former ability which really paid off after 1972. For, despite his identification with liberal politics and a losing campaign, he turned his reputation into a highly profitable enterprise.

Corporate clients like ARCO and Exxon recruited Caddell to explain “alienation” and the mood of America. He bought new cars and new houses, but his first love remained politics.

In the skirmishing for the 1976 election, Caddell advised a number of Democrats—George McGovern, Birch Bayh, Sargent Shriver—before ending up (shortly before the New Hampshire primary) with Jimmy Carter.



That surprised many Caddell friends, who had heard him talk bitterly of Carter—and specifically of Carter's backing of hawkish Henry Jackson—in the past. But Caddell was no ideologue, and Carter looked like a winner.

When Carter did indeed win, Caddell emerged in a new role: presidential adviser. Few presidents have entered the White House with less of a fixed philosophy than Jimmy Carter. None has put more reliance on facts, figures, statistics, polls—and pollsters. So Patrick Caddell became not only a tactician, but a strategist in the Oval Office.

No pollster in history has had the influence of Caddell. That was most clearly shown last summer, when President Carter's "malaise" speech reflected Caddell's view of the country. "Listening to the President," said one corporate vice president, "was like listening to our briefings by Caddell."

Carter—and Caddell—argued that America is in a unique period, one in which there is a "crisis of confidence," because people no longer believe that (1) they can affect the political process, and (2) the political leaders they elect can affect the process very much, either. Politics, Caddell said, is becoming a "spectator sport."

Caddell's views were controversial; they've been debated in the pages of this magazine. But there's no controversy about his influence in the White House—or his ability to talk to clients with clarity and certainty and hyperbole which makes them listen—and want to believe. "No one knows what the hell is going on in this country," says one old friend of Caddell, "and he sounds very plausible."

#### Peter Hart: Found Too Late?

Pat Caddell's impact on the 1980 campaign extends beyond Carter, to the two other Democratic campaigns. Senator Edward Kennedy used Caddell as his pollster in his last Senate campaign, but, like his older brothers, he was more interested in numbers than advice. (Back in 1960, when Lou Harris attempted to explain some results to John Kennedy, JFK reportedly cut him short: "Just give me the numbers Lou," he said, "I can figure them out.")

Kennedy was also dubious of polls following the defeats of two close Senate allies, John Tunney of California and Dick Clark of Iowa, who had been running ahead in their private surveys. And Kennedy campaign manager (and brother-in-law) Steve Smith thought Caddell's relationship with Carter might make a good campaign issue.

But if any candidate needed a sophisticated pollster, Ted Kennedy needed one. So finally—and very lately—he retained Peter Hart. Hart, a former associate of Lou Harris, has polled for such recently elected Senators as DeConcini (D-Arizona), Baucus (D-Montana), Bradley (D-New Jersey), Heflin (D-Alabama), and Heinz (R-Pennsylvania). His associate, Michael Barone, is the

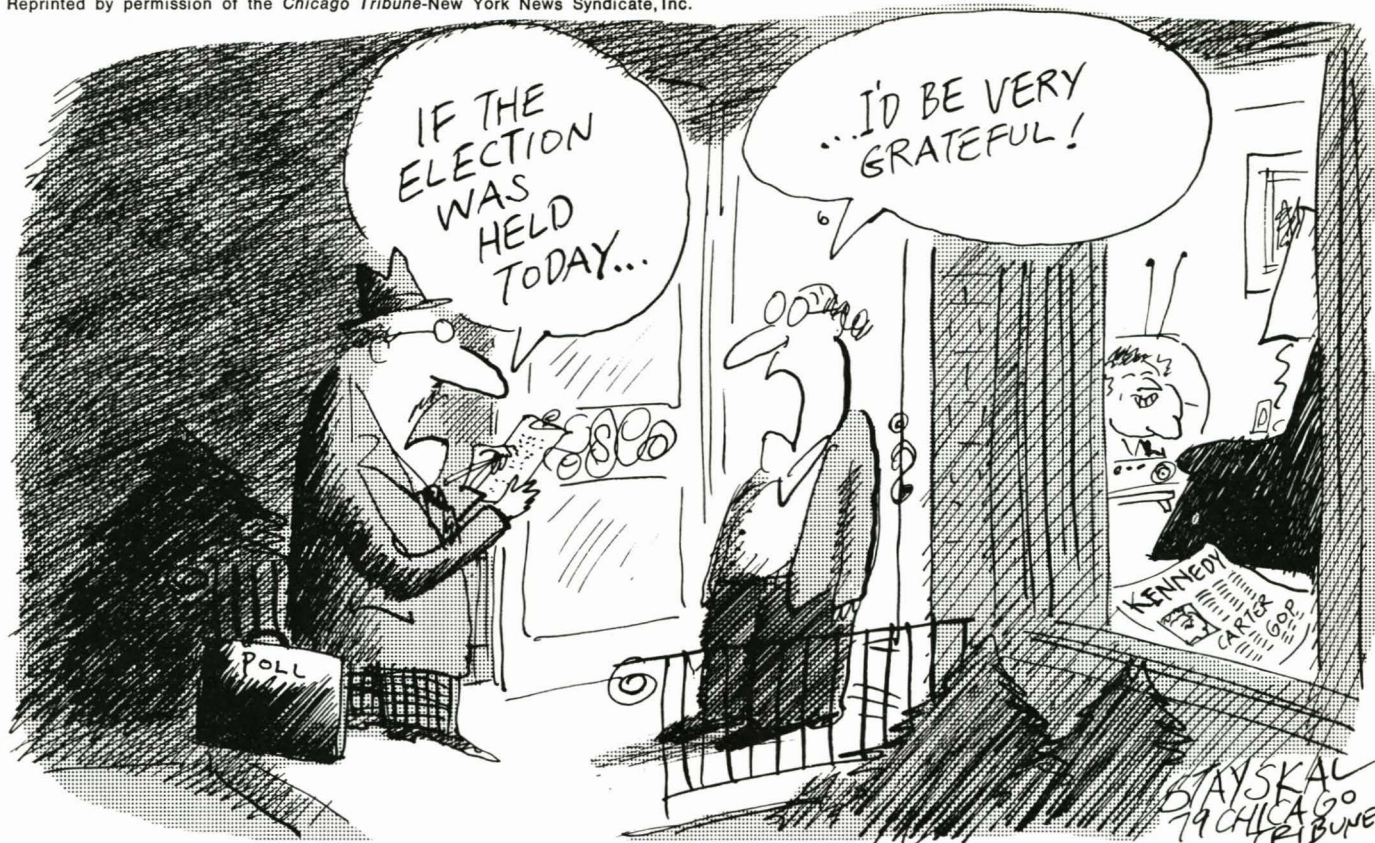


Top row: Patrick Caddell  
and Peter Hart  
Middle row: Richard  
Wirthlin and Bob Teeter  
Bottom: Lance Tarrance

author of *The Almanac of American Politics* and one of the best analysts of historical and demographic trends around. Early last summer before joining up with Kennedy, Hart was one of the few analysts who did not write off Carter's reelection chances. He noted that "Voter opinion surveys at this time are etched in wet sand on the water's edge; they are as firmly fixed as the size of the next wave" and he suggested that Carter could emerge as the "remainderman" winner in the presidential election, as he was judged against candidates with more serious liabilities. No doubt Hart has mixed emotions as he rereads those words.

The third Democratic candidate, Jerry Brown, has even less respect for polls and pollsters than does Kennedy. In Brown's gubernatorial campaign, top aides Tom Quinn and Rick Maullin designed some surveys and ran them in-house. But Brown says he paid no attention to them and looked at no surveys before getting into this year's race.





### The Republican Stable

Among the Republicans, Richard Wirthlin, Ronald Reagan's pollster, has the longest and closest relationship with his candidate. Wirthlin shares Ronald Reagan's philosophy. He is a Mormon and works only for conservatives. But Wirthlin, whose firm, Decision Making Information, has developed some of the most innovative computer programming in the business, also shares former campaign manager John Sears's basic view of what Reagan must do to win in November. He believes the election will be decided by "moderate Republicans," Independents, and moderate Democrats—and he believes Reagan must moderate and soften his image to attract them. Wirthlin briefs Reagan regularly; but the relationship is still closer to the Kennedy/Hart model than the Carter/Caddell one.

George Bush's pollster, Bob Teeter, typifies moderate Republicanism. He is a banker's son from a small Michigan town, where Democrats were few and far between and Republicans were identified with respectability, peace, honesty in government, civil rights, and fiscal conservatism. He now lives in Ann Arbor, where, he says, "80 percent of my friends are liberal Democrats." And his clients include Republicans who have won in Democratic constituencies, like Governors Thompson (Illinois), Rhodes (Ohio), and Milliken (Michigan).

Teeter is a close adviser to Gerald Ford and a friend of Howard Baker. But Bush started calling Teeter

two years ago, and the two work well together. Despite Teeter's midwestern background and Bush's ivy league base, the two see victory for the GOP in the same place: just slightly to the right of center. Teeter's numbers and Bush's instincts coincide.

If Kennedy needed sophisticated polling more than his Democratic opponents, Connally needed it more than his Republican ones. Connally, like Kennedy, started the campaign with major negatives in terms of personal image. As his pollster, the Texan retained another Texan, Lance Tarrance, a former partner of Wirthlin's who broke away to form his own company a few years ago. Tarrance has won some major upsets—like the 1978 Texas gubernatorial campaign—and is particularly adept at up-to-the-minute telephone surveys. But like Kennedy and Brown, Connally is skeptical of pollsters. "He reads the polls," says a Texas politician, "but goes with his guts. John is more certain about what he should say and do than any politician I know. He knows best."

As this is written, the pollsters tell us that Jimmy Carter is the leader in the 1980 presidential race. And that John Connally is, next to Jerry Brown, in just about the worst shape of all. They tell us that Jimmy Carter is perceived as honest and sincere. And that John Connally is not. Which makes it so ironic that Carter, more than anyone else, relies on his polls—and Connally, more than anyone but Brown, his instincts. I like to think that if Carter wins and Connally loses it will be for reasons other than that.





by Richard Jensen

## POLLS AND POLITICS

# Democracy by the Numbers

**T**he United States today seems awash with public opinion polls, especially as the presidential campaign begins to heat up. More than half a dozen newspapers and television networks along with several private organizations now conduct regular national surveys on leading questions of the day. The *New York Times* reported this February that no less than 147 organizations conduct similar surveys on a state and local basis. And, of course, both business and the government sponsor many surveys of their own.

One may well ask: how did all of this polling get started? Have Americans always been so obsessed with counting opinions? And what has this contributed over the years to the political process?

The pollsters themselves believe that public opinion polls first emerged in the mid-1930s; the 1930s did indeed represent a turning point, thanks to the simultaneous technical improvements in the gathering of statistics and the realization that both democratic government and the merchants of capitalism needed new tools to deal with the political and economic crises of the time. However, a closer look at our history reveals that since the earliest days of the Republic, politicians have been looking for ways to predict—and to shape—election outcomes.

While historians have had difficulty unearthing early voting statistics, they have uncovered many of the early pollbooks in which the actual vote of each person was recorded. Those books, when combined with wealth data from tax lists, religious affiliation from church records, and ethnic identification from surnames, permit the historian to undertake sophisticated analysis of voting patterns. In eight elections between 1796 and 1802, for example, wealth, ethnicity, and place of residence combined were excellent predictors of how men in Frederick County, Maryland, chose between the parties of John Adams (Federalist) and Thomas Jefferson (Republican). Men high on all three predictors were 93 percent Federalist; men low on all three were 85 percent Republican.

Although politicians vaguely realized the social, economic, and ethnic influences on voting patterns, they lacked a research design to devise quantitative descriptions of individual behavior. They were sometimes will-

ing, however, to prove the legitimacy of their cause by sponsoring publication of simple tabulations. In 1787, the vigorous efforts of Massachusetts Governor James Bowdoin to suppress the Shays' Rebellion of poor farmers led to his defeat at the hands of a popular hero, John Hancock. Shortly after the election, an "Impartial Observer"—clearly from Bowdoin's camp—released to the press a list "as accurate as could be obtained" of the "number and division of the votes among the different classes of citizens of [Boston]":

**Table 1**  
BOWDOIN vs. HANCOCK, BOSTON 1787

	For Mr. B	For Mr. H
Physicians	19	2
Clergymen	2	0
Lawyers	17	3
Independent gentlemen	50	0
Merchants and traders	295	21
Printers	8	4
Tradesmen	328	299
Labourers, servants, and so on	5	446
Total	724	775

Three days later, a Hancock supporter lamented the "very great error in the arrangement of the votes last Monday," and gleefully presented the "authentic breakdown."

**Table 2**  
BOWDOIN vs. HANCOCK: REANALYSIS

	For Mr. B	For Mr. H
Usurers	28	0
Speculators in Publick Securities	576	0
Stockholders and directors of the M—tts B—k	81	0
Persons under British influence	17	0
Merchants, tradesmen, and other worthy members of society	21	448
Friends to the Revolution	0	327
Wizards	1	0
Total	724	775

Regular canvassing of voters, like so many mod-



ern ideas, originated in New England because that region was the first to produce a large body of educated voters susceptible to persuasion. The first such polls emerged there during the Jefferson administration. The Republicans, as the minority party in the region, realized that "a majority can relax its exertions occasionally without hazard; a minority must exert its full strength constantly." Therefore the Connecticut state manager in 1805 called for the immediate appointment of town and district managers who were to prepare lists of each voter, ascertaining which were "decided" Republicans or Federalists and which were "doubtful." Not to be outdone, the Federalists, warning that "an inferior party may by combination or concert carry their measures against the will of an inactive, or disunited majority," began their own systematic canvasses.

Outside New England, such polling was at first considered a waste of energy better spent on staging rallies or barbecues, or signing up influential notables or kin group leaders who would bring their followers along with them. As those regions modernized, however, they too began to canvass definite and doubtful voters. In the interests of secrecy, the actual canvassing lists were usually destroyed as soon as a fresh list was available, but results of sorts later became known through the rifling of confidential letters or the outright theft of secret campaign documents. (In an interesting case of historical detection, a party leader used his canvass book as a scrapbook for newspaper clippings which allowed historian Ronald Formisano, upon discovering the document, to steam off the clippings, match the names to the city directory and publish a study on the social correlates of party identification in the 1850s.)

By the late nineteenth century, the art of canvassing had been perfected and was widely utilized by astute politicians and major parties alike. In 1880, for example, Indiana Republican leader Benjamin Harrison, alarmed by reports that veterans were defecting, ordered a canvass of all 26,000 veterans in the state (he learned to his relief that 69 percent were still in the party fold). The national parties, then at their historic peaks of strength, used armies of volunteers to conduct gigantic canvasses. In 1892, each party polled every midwestern county at least once "to get down to bed-rock facts on which to base our calculations and efforts."

The parties also began to appreciate the value of advertising, decades before commercial national advertising became established. The Democratic National Committee spent the enormous sum of \$2.5 million in 1892 to circulate millions of pamphlets and personalized letters and to subsidize 14,000 field workers and orators. Inspired in its turn, the Republican National Committee in 1896 spent \$3.5 million for an even greater effort, polling with an intensity never matched before or since in a democratic society. Canvassers were everywhere, meticulously counting the party preferences of each individual voter.

It must be kept in mind that the party canvasses of the nineteenth century were not opinion surveys. Questions were restricted to the pollee's voting intentions and did not probe his attitudes toward public affairs. This in no way indicates a disinterest in the public mood, for no less an arch-Federalist than Fisher Ames of Massachusetts felt, in the wake of the Republican victory of 1800, that "We must court popular favor, we must study public opinion, and accommodate measures to what it is and still more to what it ought to be, for that last will remain and uphold us." But to the Federal mind, what public opinion "ought to be" never appeared in their tabulations of attitudes of men in the street. The other parties of the nineteenth century were rather more democratic in outlook, but their conception of public opinion emphasized the formal channels of party organization, especially caucuses and conventions, rather than independent attitudes for the "true" expression of public sentiment. The opinions of the citizens outside the party framework did not count, so there was an absence of referenda and a disregard for petition campaigns.

Probably the first real interest in the general opinion of the population was evinced by state bureaus of labor statistics late in the century. In the 1880s, the Iowa bureau, as part of its survey of labor and economic conditions, included attitudinal questions on the liquor issue, the problems of the farmers, and the dangers of immigration. Again in 1894, the Michigan Bureau of Labor Statistics surveyed 5,600 farm laborers concerning their hardships during the depression and their thoughts on immigration. And finally, during the Progressive era when parties were weak and independent thought flourished, the referendum and initiative became popular and surveys of the attitudes of particular groups became common.

### The Introduction of the Straw Poll

Yet another refinement of polling, however, was still to emerge. Before the 1920s, the concept of *random sampling*—with each person in the target population having an equal probability of entering the same—was only dimly understood. The director of the 1850 census, J. D. B. DeBow, took a sample of twenty-three counties and cross-tabulated the data to analyze patterns of marriage, schooling, and inequality of wealth. But this was a unique effort. Social and labor surveys by necessity covered only a sample of the population and until the 1930s these were inevitably haphazard.

The first efforts to "sample" the opinion of the general population—as opposed to canvasses—were made in the 1840s by newspapers conducting straw polls to predict the outcome of elections. But it was not until 1896 that straw polls suddenly became serious business. During that year there was an extraordinary amount of inter-party shifting taking place. With the Midwest looming as the decisive region in the McKinley-Bryan contest, the Chicago press devoted enor-



mous energy to in-depth reporting of critical segments of the population. The *Chicago Tribune*, for example, assigned crack reporters to canvass workers in dozens of Illinois factories and railroad yards and came out with some startling statistics. McKinley—the champion of industrialization—was the choice of 82 percent of the factory hands and 86 percent of the railroaders.

Surpassing even this journalistic enterprise that same year was a straw poll conducted by a politically independent Chicago newspaper, the *Record*. In 1896 it spent upwards of \$60,000 to mail postcard ballots to each of the 328,000 registered voters in Chicago, and

to what it hoped was a random sample of one voter in eight who lived in twelve Midwestern states. By the end of October, when a quarter million returns had been received, the *Record* employed a team of eminent mathematicians (astronomers rather than social scientists) to interpret the results. They predicted McKinley would win 57.94 percent of the Chicago vote, off by only .04 percent. But outside Chicago, the newspaper's random sampling proved to be a failure.

Straw polling gained new impetus early in the century as the larger metropolitan newspapers increasing-  
(Continued on page 58)

## The Literary Digest Poll: Appearances Can Be Deceiving

by Richard Link

The 1936 straw poll of the *Literary Digest* has for years been cited by teachers and texts as a favorite example of how a poor sample frame can yield wildly biased results. In a recent article in the *American Statistician* (November 1976), Maurice C. Bryson went back to the original source and examined the sample methodology of the poll. He was able to demonstrate that it was the pattern of non-responses rather than the sampling technique that seemed to cause the mischief.

Yet, if one looks more closely, it is apparent that even with such non-response, a modest amount of data analysis could have saved the editors of *Literary Digest* a great deal of embarrassment and ultimate mythical notoriety. The October 31, 1936 issue of the magazine reports not only the 1936 poll results but also shows how the same respondents reported their 1932 votes. The U.S. 1932 actual vote can be used along with the reported 1932 poll data to adjust the 1936 poll data state by state, "awarding" the electoral votes of each state to the candidate with the higher adjusted percentage.

Two kinds of adjustments are used in modern election polling:

(1) Adjustment by swings, which yields a 1936 Swing Adjusted Poll. This percentage = 1936 poll % — (1932 poll % — 1932 Actual State %), and (2) Adjustment by ratio, which yields a 1936 Ratio Adjusted Poll. This percentage =

$$\frac{1932 \text{ Actual State } \%}{1932 \text{ Poll } \%} \times 1936 \text{ Poll } \%$$

Consider the example of California. In 1932, the *Literary Digest* poll found that 46.8 percent of California voters planned to vote Democratic; in actuality, California that year went Democratic by 61.0 percent—14.2 percent higher than the poll had indicated. In 1936, the *Literary Digest* poll found 46.3 percent of Californians saying they planned to vote Democratic. If the *Digest* editors had applied the 1932 experience, it would have projected a 60.5 percent Democratic vote (the Swing Adjusted vote) or 60.3 percent Democratic vote (the Ratio Adjusted Poll result). In either case, the state would have been listed by the *Digest* in the likely Democratic column in 1936 rather

than the Republican—and that, of course, is where California wound up in the general election.

Using these same methods of analysis, a total of nineteen states would have been moved from the Republican to the Democratic side of the ledger in the *Digest's* 1936 projections, including Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, and Wisconsin. No state would have been moved the other way—from the Democratic to the Republican side. Moreover, under either method of adjustment, the electoral projection would have pointed to a Roosevelt landslide (or at least a substantial win) instead of the Landon landslide predicted by the unadjusted data.

It is easy to be wise after the fact, but these results do have a moral. We often hear and teach about the evil of adjusting data, particularly poll data. Indeed, the editors of *Literary Digest* had a conscious policy of *not* adjusting and simply telling the story of the results. We hear less about the dangers of not adjusting; but the 1936 *Digest* poll is a classic example of the fact that the failure to adjust bad data can also be fatal.



# THESE PEOPLE SAY OUR PROBLEMS CAN BE SOLVED

Everytime you pick up the newspaper it seems there is another crisis. And it seems like someone is saying it can't be solved. But there are solutions. Some of them have been proposed by the experts and scholars listed here.

They have done so under the auspices of the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. Founded in 1943, AEI has been called "the liveliest think tank in this town" by columnist Nick Timmesch and "... an increasingly influential center for serious academic study" by *BUSINESS WEEK*.

If you need to see the positive side of dealing with our problems, to be more fully aware of the current issues, you need to receive the AEI publications on a monthly basis.

Check the advantages of the AEI Associates Program and enroll today.

✓		✓
ASSOC	IATES	
✓	PROG	RAM

**ARTHUR BURNS • IRVING KRISTOL • DANIEL  
PATRICK MOYNIHAN • NATHAN GLAZER •  
GEORGE WILL • JACK KEMP • GERALD FORD  
• MARINA V.N. WHITMAN • JESSE JACKSON •  
JEANE J. KIRKPATRICK • EDWARD KENNEDY**



## THE ADVANTAGES

### ☒ **Public Opinion**

As an AEI Associate, you receive a one-year subscription to this lively, topical magazine that features articles exploring the reasoning behind the public's opinion combined with a special 20-page roundup of current opinion data from major polling organizations.

### ☒ ☒ **TWO MORE ONE- YEAR SUBSCRIPTIONS OF YOUR CHOICE**

#### **Regulation**

A popular bimonthly magazine that keeps an eye on government regulation and how it is affecting your daily life.

#### **the economist**

As essential monthly report edited by AEI senior fellow Herbert Stein that clarifies current economic issues in an objective manner.

#### **AEI Foreign Policy and Defense Review**

Published ten times a year, each issue focuses on one foreign policy or defense issue by drawing on the views of internationally recognized experts.

### ☒ **30% DISCOUNT**

In addition, Associates are entitled to a 30% discount on any AEI books or studies you may order during the year. A catalog of the AEI publications is sent to you immediately, and you will be informed of new AEI books through our bimonthly newsletter *MEMORANDUM*.

### ☒ **START THE ADVANTAGE TODAY . . .**

To enroll in the AEI Associates Program, or to give the year-long advantage to a friend or relative, just complete the business reply card in the back of this magazine or send \$30 to AEI ASSOCIATES PROGRAM, American Enterprise Institute, 1150 Seventeenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Be sure to print your name and address clearly and note which two of the three AEI periodicals you would like to receive in addition to *PUBLIC OPINION*. (One-third of the enrollment fee will be credited for each periodical subscription.)

A one-year enrollment in the AEI Associates Program makes the perfect Christmas gift.

• MURRAY WEIDENBAUM • ALFRED KAHN •  
BARRY GOLDWATER • MAXWELL TAYLOR  
• HERBERT STEIN • DANIEL YANKELOVICH •  
ROBERT BORK • MICHAEL NOVAK • ROBERT  
NISBET • BEN WATTENBERG • SAM NUNN



ly broke their partisan ties in order to enlarge their circulations. Nonpartisan straw polls began to flourish, reaching a peak in the 1920s. By 1912 a syndicate led by the *Chicago Record-Herald* and the *New York Herald* was conducting presidential polls in every northern state. The Hearst chain polled forty-six states in 1928 and came up with a reasonably accurate prediction of Hoover's landslide. But many of the eighty-five straw polls carried out that year were haphazard streetcorner affairs conducted by staff reporters whose sole purpose was to generate "news." In a few instances, attempts to neutralize the wild biases of such polls were made, notably by the *Columbus Dispatch* which began systematic polls in Ohio in 1916 and had, by the late 1920s, carefully selected geographical locations and developed a quota system based on party, sex, religion, nationality, and economic status.

The most famous series of straw polls of all were conducted from 1916 to 1936 by the *Literary Digest*, a popular weekly magazine. It focused on presidential elections, but added "referenda" on Prohibition in 1922, 1930, and 1932. These were the first efforts to gauge national public opinion beyond the strict limits of election returns.

The *Digest* scheme was based on its practice of mass mailings to potential subscribers, sometimes totaling as many as 10 million pieces. In 1916 the *Digest* asked readers to volunteer reports on the prevailing sentiment in their community regarding the Wilson-Hughes contest. In 1920 the *Digest* began mailing millions of "ballots" to the public at large, with a subscription blank enclosed so that the voter could see his vote tabulated in future issues. Archibald Crossley, a leading scientific pollster of the 1930s, joined the *Digest's* research staff in 1922, and in 1924 the magazine first made systematic use of telephone directories and automobile registration files. Since party lines had disintegrated in the presidential contests of the 1920s, the straw polls in general, and the *Digest* poll in particular, provided reasonably accurate, nonpartisan predictions of the outcomes.

But in 1936, methodological sloppiness sank the *Digest*. It had lost Crossley and made no effort to control for the biases built into its approach. Indeed, as a cost-saving move in the lean depression years, it apparently re-used its 1932 mailing list instead of purchasing up-to-date lists. A Gallup mail poll using telephone lists and automobile registrations gave Landon exactly the same landslide that the *Literary Digest* predicted. In part the *Digest's* bad results stemmed from the strong class polarization in 1936—59 percent of the upper third income groups supported Landon, versus 30 percent of the lower third, and only 18 percent of voters on relief. But that was not the only problem. The *Digest* had sent ballots to every registered voter in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and to random samples of half the regis-

tered voters in Scranton and a third in Chicago. In each case the respondents favored Landon while Roosevelt swept their cities. The failure of the *Digest* poll, therefore, came in its inability to control nonresponse—one-fourth of the Landon supporters mailed back their postcards, versus one-sixth of the Roosevelt voters. The mail questionnaire was exposed as a guaranteed disaster. (For another look at the 1936 *Digest* fiasco, please see the accompanying article by Richard Link on page 55.)

### Advent of Modern Polling

Although the *Literary Digest* deserved praise of a sort for accustoming the public to polls, its methods were so inherently flawed that it in no way served as a prototype for modern polling. Credit instead must be given to scientific developments in the 1910s and 1920s. During World War I the army employed psychologists to administer batteries of intelligence and aptitude tests to millions of recruits to channel talents into the appropriate jobs. After the war, academic psychologists perfected the art of designing questionnaires and discovered patterns of response through statistical analysis, both essential to polling.

The 1920s were also the golden era of consumer-oriented capitalism, based on the simple premise that the man who could discover what consumers wanted would soon be worth a million dollars. Advertising and market research became glamour industries as Madison Avenue challenged Wall Street. The print media combined their experience in straw polls with their need for increased circulation and advertising to create systematic market research. The Curtis chain (*Saturday Evening Post*) was an early pioneer in detecting the buyer's market. Advertising agencies went to the length of hiring Ph.D.'s in psychology to devise questionnaires to tap buyers' attitudes. The mail questionnaire—cheap, easy, its worst flaws invisible—was the thing of its day.

Henry Link—psychology Ph.D., media expert, advertising specialist, and market researcher—created the first modern poll, the "Psychological Barometer," for the Psychological Corporation in 1932. The Barometer sought to measure the attitude of the entire population toward specific consumer products—soaps, coffees, and the like. It used scientifically designed, pretested questionnaires. The interviewers were trained crews of field workers, hired and supervised on a subcontract basis by psychology professors on campuses across the country. They interviewed people personally in their homes, thereby eliminating the non-response bias of mail surveys. The Barometer presented fairly sophisticated statistical tabulations of consumer preferences according to demographic variables. Advertising agencies, desperate to sell national products in a shrinking, depressed economy, welcomed the Barometer as a scientific breakthrough to ease the copywriters' task of pinpointing their audiences. The Psychological Corporation, which still flourishes today, provided the model copied by all later polls. Only two ingredients were still lacking: ade-



quate sampling frames and questions regarding public policy.

Media researchers in the early 1930s, in cooperation with government and academic statisticians, solved the sampling problem. They combined into a practical format their own intuitive sense of the need to include all sectors of the population with the mathematical theory of random error. To save money, they adopted quota systems based on known demographic distributions rather than the area probability approach which academicians felt was theoretically superior. In quota sampling, an interviewer is turned loose in a large area with instructions to contact a certain number of men and women in each socioeconomic class. In area probability sampling, the interviewer is given the precise residence to be contacted and is strictly bound by those instructions. This latter method can prove costly, given the need for repeated calls if the householder is absent: and it is, in any case, only slightly more accurate. However, in delicate work like predicting elections, a slight but consistent bias will elect Deweys instead of Trumans.

### Polls and Politicians

The New Deal, at a time when party lines were in flux, renewed interest in public opinion on policy issues. Moreover, the idea of consumer democracy in the marketplace easily translated into the idea of consumer democracy in the political arena. George Gallup became the articulate spokesman for polls as the "pulse of democracy." Elections, he posited, were inadequate expressions of the popular will, for true democracy is a continuous process of citizen participation and leadership response. Gallup especially distrusted lobbyists and special-interest groups that purported to represent labor, agriculture, consumers or "the true *vox populi*." Unless the legislator "is to be the easy prey of . . . anti-social pressure, he must have access to the expression of a truly 'public' opinion, containing the views of all the groups in our complex society."

Gallup, Crossley, and Elmo Roper simultaneously launched the modern attitudinal polls in 1935. They pooled the experience of psychologists, statisticians, and market researchers, and immediately captured the notice of leaders across the country. President Roosevelt became an instant devotee of the new, more scientific polls, for unlike the straw poll of the *Literary Digest*, they correctly predicted his landslide in 1936, and he thought they might well continue the happy practice. Even so, few other Democratic politicians were willing to abandon their traditional distrust.

With the outbreak of World War II, a clever idea for a new use of polls sprouted in Washington—the systematic manipulation of public opinion. Roosevelt's dependence on public opinion was legion. He timed his key foreign and domestic policy announcements after careful consideration of the tenor of public opinion as analyzed for him by Hadley Cantril, a leading pollster.

The Office of War Information was helpful in this respect, commissioning polls from the Agriculture Department (which had done pioneering work in survey research under the direction of Roosevelt crony and Agriculture Secretary Henry Wallace) and from private concerns. How far the executive branch might have gone toward complete control of public opinion—through censorship, publicity releases, and close monitoring of attitudes—is uncertain. In 1943, perceiving a threat to their role as the legitimate interpreters and representatives of the public, conservative congressmen revolted and passed new legislation which drastically reduced the scope of government polling and publicity. When the war ended, OWI vanished from the scene and the survey agency in Agriculture was ordered to concentrate on corn and hogs instead of attitudes and opinions. The director of the Agriculture unit, Rensis Likert, and his team of researchers resigned and set up shop as the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan.

### Decline of Confidence in Statistical Democracy

Throughout, the rigidly nonpartisan polls continued to flourish. By 1948 Gallup's American Institute of Public Opinion was mailing four releases a week to 126 newspapers with 20 million readers. The polling industry had spread to dozens of states and local communities, as well as abroad, and was grossing as much as \$25 million a year. The Greek language added a new word: "to Gallup."

"We were getting a little cocky," Gallup later admitted. Not only the pollsters, but every major political commentator and editorial writer in the country believed the forecasts of a Dewey win in 1948. With the Dewey debacle, the unblinking confidence in the science of opinion forecasting was shattered. Weak polls collapsed . . . the glamour vanished from the field. How could polls be the key to true democracy if they could not even get a simple election straight? True, the commercial side of the industry survived—revenues climbed to \$100 million by 1956—but only because the pollsters concentrated on mundane matters, evaluation of radio audiences and the like. Not until the 1960s, when the manipulative value of secret polls refired the imagination of politicians, would polls again play a major role in politics.

The claims that are made on behalf of polling, however, have never been as extravagant since the 1948 debacle. During the 1930s and early 1940s, as more scientific polls came into vogue, some advocates thought that the power of statistics could be fused with the ideals of democracy. Modern polls, it was said, could create a new self-awareness of society, showing leaders exactly what people believed, what they feared, and what they could be persuaded to accept. As the 1980s begin, we know that polls can indeed serve many useful purposes, but for better or for worse, the ideal of statistical democracy died on November 2, 1948, and is not likely to be resurrected. □



# Snapshots

By Karlyn Keene

*Since this column first appeared, our editorial offices at AEI have received many public and private studies that might be of interest to Public Opinion readers. We welcome this material. Herein is a capsulized summary of some of the more pertinent.*

Events in Iran and Afghanistan have once again drawn attention to the combat readiness of U.S. military forces—and if a recent survey of army enlisted men is to be believed, there is good reason for concern. A recent article in *Army* magazine reported the results of a survey of 425 soldiers in the grades of private through sergeant assigned to eight companies at two stateside posts. It is important to be cautious about drawing any conclusion from a survey this small, but the results themselves bear reporting.

The survey found enlisted men alienated and highly cynical about government and about their military service. Large majorities felt that most people are not concerned about others and that people will take advantage of them if given a chance. Some 58 percent said that most politicians usually do not tell the truth, 41 percent felt that most high government officials and political leaders cannot be trusted, and 51 percent expressed the view that government is not concerned about people like themselves.

Attitudes toward their role in the military were also negative. Some 52 percent in the survey indicated that they believed they could not count on their officers and senior NCO's to look out for them, and 37 percent believed their senior NCO's and officers are not concerned about them. In addition, 44 percent do not believe their platoons would make every effort to reach them if they were cut off in battle and another 31 percent are uncertain. Some 41 percent thought the government would send them to fight a war even though it was not vital to our national interest, and another 21 percent were unsure. Moreover, 32 percent did not believe their officers and senior NCO's would be willing to go through anything that

they made their men go through in battle; 23 percent felt that the American people would not provide the support necessary to win a war and 36 percent were unsure if they would or not.

The author, Major Stephen Westbrook, believes soldiers bring to the service their attitudes toward society and life in general rather than forming them while they serve. There was no correlation between any of the dimensions of alienation and the time that the soldier had spent in the service.

Nonetheless, this portrait of attitudes toward fellow soldiers provides little comfort for anyone, including Westbrook. To make his point, he cites S. L. A. Marshall's dictum that when "confidence in the character of a unit falters, the unit itself is on the way to defeat and dissolution."

\* \* \*

In August of 1979, the editors of *McCall's* magazine asked readers who were married or otherwise involved in an intimate relationship to fill out a questionnaire titled, "How Satisfying is Your Life Together?" More than 20,000 women responded, and partial results were published in the January and February 1980 issues of the magazine. More than half of those who responded were between the ages of twenty-one to thirty-four, and 82 percent were married.

*McCall's* readers indicated that before marriage, their friends and social lives were the most important to them. Now, 61 percent say that the "feeling of being close to someone" is most important. Children, or the desire to have children, was second on the list at 54 percent, with home coming in third at 43 percent. As a result of their relationships, *McCall's* readers felt that they lost "some of my independence" (47 percent), but had also gained a "greater emotional security and stability" (52 percent), "a closeness, an understanding 'best friend'" (45 percent), "financial security" (38 percent), and "self-confidence" (37 percent).

Some 64 percent of *McCall's* readers described their current relationship as warm and companionable, while 27 percent described it as "fun." The hardest subjects for partners to discuss, cited by 66 percent, were emotional problems and inadequacies; sex problems followed with 39 percent. "Express their feelings" was the most important thing that women wanted their partners to do.

\* \* \*

Personal expectations of the man in the Oval Office remain extraordinarily high, according to a nationwide Gallup survey taken this fall and commissioned by WHYY Philadelphia/Wilmington for public television. Four in ten Americans would object if a president was not a member of a church, and 43 percent to his telling ethnic or racial jokes in private. A president would be almost universally condemned for occasionally smoking pot.

The least objectionable of the items tested were divorce (17 percent would object strongly), wearing of blue jeans in the Oval Office (21 percent), and having a cocktail before dinner each night (14 percent).

\* \* \*

Between November 23, 1979 and January 2, 1980, Dresner, Morris and Tortorello conducted a major survey of 1,146 Black adults for Data Black Public Opinion Polls, a new organization whose chairman is Dr. Kenneth Clark and whose president is Percy Sutton. In two open-ended questions, Data Black asked Blacks to name the major problems facing Black Americans and the major problems facing the United States. Unemployment was cited as the major problem facing Black Americans (43 percent), and Iran (44 percent) and inflation/high costs of living (30 percent) were seen as the major problems facing the United States. Overall, 36 percent mentioned discrimination as a major problem facing Blacks, whereas only 13 percent mentioned it as a major problem facing the United States.

The survey found little evidence of a rift between Jews and Blacks. Among various social groups, Hispanics are rated most favorably by Blacks, closely followed by Jews, rated 41 percent favorably and 11 percent unfavorably. White Anglo-Saxon Protestants are viewed with least favor by Blacks: 34 percent saw them in a favorable light, but 17 percent unfavorable. Upper income Blacks (\$25,000+) tend to be more unfavorable than others toward each ethnic group except Hispanics.

The relatively favorable view of Jews does not translate into sympathy for Israel. Despite the absence of an overwhelming identification with Palestinians, Blacks believe that Jesse Jackson and Joseph Lowery helped Middle East peace efforts. Blacks clearly favor Palestinian demands for a homeland and favor official U.S. recognition by 40 to 28 percent.



**THE AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH**, established in 1943, is a publicly supported, nonpartisan, research and educational organization. Its purpose is to assist policy makers, scholars, businessmen, the press, and the public by providing objective analysis of national and international issues. Views expressed in the institute's publications are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff, advisory panels, officers, or trustees of AEI.

#### COUNCIL OF ACADEMIC ADVISERS

**Paul W. McCracken**, *Chairman, Edmund Ezra Day University Professor of Business Administration, University of Michigan*

**Robert H. Bork**, *Alexander M. Bickel Professor of Public Law, Yale Law School*

**Kenneth W. Dam**, *Harold J. and Marion F. Green Professor of Law, University of Chicago Law School*

**Donald C. Hellmann**, *Professor of Political Science and International Studies, University of Washington*

**D. Gale Johnson**, *Eliakim Hastings Moore Distinguished Service Professor of Economics and Provost, University of Chicago*

**Robert A. Nisbet**, *Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute*

**Herbert Stein**, *A. Willis Robertson Professor of Economics, University of Virginia*

**James Q. Wilson**, *Henry Lee Shattuck Professor of Government, Harvard University*

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Herman J. Schmidt**, *Chairman of the Board*

**William J. Baroody, Jr.**, *President*

**Charles T. Fisher III**, *Treasurer*

**Richard J. Farrell**

**Richard B. Madden**

**Richard D. Wood**

**Edward Styles**, *Director of Publications*

#### PROGRAM DIRECTORS

**Russell Chapin**, *Legislative Analyses*

**Robert B. Helms**, *Health Policy Studies*

**Thomas F. Johnson**, *Economic Policy Studies*

**Sidney L. Jones**, *Seminar Programs*

**Marvin H. Kusters/James C. Miller III**, *Government Regulation Studies*

**Jack Meyer**, *Special Projects (acting)*

**W. S. Moore**, *Legal Policy Studies*

**Rudolph G. Penner**, *Tax Policy Studies*

**Howard R. Penniman/Austin Ranney**, *Political and Social Processes*

**Robert J. Pranger**, *Foreign and Defense Policy Studies*

#### PERIODICALS

**AEI ECONOMIST**, *Herbert Stein, Editor*

**AEI FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENSE REVIEW**, *Robert J. Pranger and Donald C. Hellmann, Co-Editors*

**PUBLIC OPINION**, *Seymour Martin Lipset and Ben J. Wattenberg, Co-Editors; David R. Gergen, Managing Editor*

**REGULATION**, *Antonin Scalia and Murray L. Weidenbaum, Co-Editors; Anne Brunsdale, Managing Editor*

**William J. Baroody, Sr.**, *Counsellor and Chairman, Development Committee*

# People Are Talking

"Regulation deals with the issues at the leading edge of discourse on political economy today. It is invaluable and, more surprising, it is entirely readable."

**Daniel Patrick Moynihan**  
*U.S. Senator, New York*

"An irreverent journal on governmental regulations . . . yeasty with ideas. . . ."

**Nick Thimmesch**  
*Los Angeles Times Syndicate*

"Bound to be must reading for persons interested in regulatory matters. . . ."

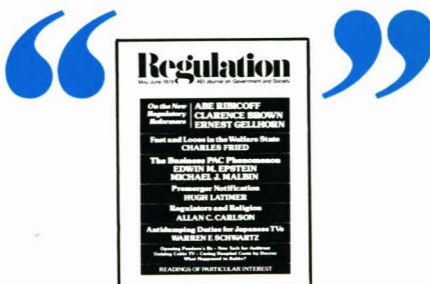
**The Washington Post**

"I applaud the work of *Regulation* magazine. Only through efforts such as this can we . . . hope to stop the strangulation of government overregulation."

**S. I. Hayakawa**  
*U.S. Senator, California*

**Join me as a regular *Regulation* reader—by subscribing now (\$12 for one year, \$22 for two).**

*Available from  
American Enterprise Institute  
1150-17th Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20036*



**American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research**

**1150 Seventeenth Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20036 • 202/862-5800**



*Essential reading for anyone interested in  
understanding the post-Watergate role of money in politics...*

# **Parties, Interest Groups, and Campaign Finance Laws**

The experts on campaign finance debate the impact of federal regulation of political campaigns.

- ★ How have the federal election laws affected the power of organized interest groups?
- ★ Who, if anyone, has benefited from the laws?
- ★ Has the law changed campaign strategies?
- ★ Have federal and state campaign finance regulations affected national and state party organizations?
- ★ How do campaign finance laws in other countries affect their own parties and interest groups?

Edited by AEI Resident Fellow Michael J. Malbin, the 384 page report is the result of a two-day conference sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute in September 1979. Participants spanned the political and academic waterfront, including representatives of organizations committed to campaign reform (Common Cause and the Democratic Study Group), academic skeptics and friends, representatives of the federal election commission, political professionals from both major parties, leading political journalists, and a wide-ranging group of political action committee representatives.

TO ORDER: Send \$5.95 (or \$11.75 cloth) per copy to:



American Enterprise Institute  
Department 245  
1150 Seventeenth Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Be sure to include your name and address and the number of copies you want. To order by phone or for information regarding special discounts on quantity orders, call (202) 862-5869. (Payment must accompany all orders under \$15.)

